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Presented By: www.criticalbench.com

AtoZFitness.com presents:
The Internet's best known trainers show you their exact step-by-step day-by-day workout plans!
Each expert answers the specific question:
"How can I gain maximum muscle and lose maximum fat in the next 30 days?"
All Star Trainer's Secrets to Maximum MUSCLE GAIN & Maximum Fat Loss IN 30 DAYS

Nine Top Fitness ,Bodybuilding and Nutritional Experts ,Finally Release their Insider Secrets to Achieving Maximum Fat Loss & Muscle Gain in Just 30 Days!

Get in the BEST SHAPE Possible! See Results in Just 30 Days! Guaranteed.

Learn the Secrets These Experts Have Saved for Their Top Paying Clients, Discover how to Drop Body Fat and Gain Muscle Mass FAST!

We Give You Step by Step Instructions by NINE Top Fitness Professionals.

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Click Here for Details.

Hi, I'm Lewis Wolk, the creator of AtoZFitness.com. Let's face it, when people go to the gym those are the two things they care about most: gaining muscle and losing fat!

But when I ask guys the two questions above I usually hear disappointing answers. They go to the gym regularly but they really don't make any measurable progress.

Why??? The gym is full of excellent equipment. They have the motivation to go to the gym. They have the desire to improve themselves. Why aren't they making major, measurable, shirt ripping, jaw dropping progress?

So I got the idea of asking the best of the best trainers what program they would give to guys wanting to gain maximum muscle and lose maximum fat in the next 30 days.

AtoZFitness negotiated a special arrangement with the top trainers on the Internet. We asked the "All Star" training experts the most-asked question from bodybuilders, athletes ,dieters and fitness buffs:

"How can I gain maximum muscle and lose maximum fat in the next 30 days?"

When you boil down most people's questions about "getting ripped" or "intensity" or "which exercises work best" etc. that is what it comes down to: How do I to gain muscle and lose fat?

So we asked these All Star trainers to just give us their best answer in a step-by-step format that every reader could apply immediately. Each expert trainer gave us exactly that! A day-by-day plan that shows you exactly what to do to get maximum results from your workouts and burn off maximum excess fat!

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All you Will Ever Need to Know About:

- **Nutrition**
- **Training**
- **Supplements**
- **Cardio**
- **Stretching**

PLUS: The Mental Advantage.

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The information in this ebook covers all the aspects you need to know about in order to **Gain Muscle and Lose Fat fast**.

Your fat loss, muscle-enhancing program is just a start. You will lose weight, feel better and increase your vitality. To keep it off for a lifetime is the key to *REAL* success. So we will cover topics that aid in long-term success. Not only do these added topics help you lose weight, but they also help ward off disease, improve health and regulate your entire body.

The subjects are:

- Metabolic Typing
- Blood Sugar
- Organic Foods
- Food Intolerances
- Circadian Rhythm (sleep)
- Water intake

Check out some of the vitally important content you will soon be able to read about in the next 5 minutes.

And These Guy's Really Know Their Stuff: Only AtoZfitness All Star Trainer's Secrets could offer you in ONE E-book Nine Top Name Writers Such As:

- **Tom Venuto**, author of the best-selling e-book, *Burn the Fat, Feed the Muscle* gives you his ***30 Day Growth Spurt Program!***
- **Pete Sisco**, revolutionary co-author of Power Factor Training, Static Contraction Training and the #1 e-book TRAIN SMART! gives you his ***30 Days of Maximally Productive Training!***
- **Christopher V. Guerriero**, Author of the best-selling book Maximize Your Metabolism as well as The 2 Day Workout, and 135 Secrets to Get Fit Fast, gives you his ***30 Day Muscle Blasting Secrets Chapter .***
- **David Grisaffi**, Washington's #1 sports trainer since 1996 and author of the e-book *Firm and Flatten Your Abs Conditioning Manual* gives you, ***David Grisaffi's Firm Your Physique a nd Lose Fat Forever!***
- **Lee Hayward**, author of the *Blast Your Bench!* and *Blast Your Squat!* e-books gives you, ***How to Build a More Muscular Body in Just 30 Days!***
- **Jeremy Markum**, who specializes in working with "busy" people, author of The Busy and Fit Advanced Training & Nutrition Guide, gives you, ***Gaining Muscle and Losing Fat (For Busy People)!***
- **Phil Campbell**, M.S., M.A., FACHE, featured Fitness RX, Physical Magazine, GNC's Let's Live, Spa Management, and featured on the cover of Personal Fitness Professional will show you ***How to Increase the Most Powerful Bodyfat Cutting, Muscle Building Substance in Your Body … Without Injections!***

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- **George A. Baselice** is certified and an instructor for The Academy of Applied Personal Training Education (A.A.P.T.E.) accredited through Hofstra University. George's other certifications include: I.S.S.A., A.C.E., A.F.P.A. (nutrition consultant), Post-Rehabilitative Exercise Programming, and Strength Coaching Theory by Charles Poliquin. George is also the author of two published books: The first is "The Turning Point", his award winning 12-week exercise and nutrition process that transformed his wife Carmela into a fitness model at the age of 46 and won George the Grand Championship of the World's Best Personal Trainer Contest.George give you his chapter ***30 Days in the Hole!***

- **George Stavrou**, B.A. Psyc., is a certified personal trainer and lifestyle& weight management consultant. George is the author of the #1 best-selling ebook on Amazon.com "How YOU Can Sculpt A Leaner, Healthier Body In12 Weeks: A Guide For Beginners!" He is also the owner of Body Sculpting Corp., a company based in Toronto, Ontario that specializes in one-stop shopping for your health and fitness needs. George's Philosophy can be summed up in his Company Slogan "A Healthy Way To A Better Body And Mind! George gives you his chapter ***How YOU Can Sculpt A Leaner, Healthier Body In 30 Days!***

Click Here for More Details.

A special compilation of 6 all-time favorite articles from each of A to Z's contributing writers !

A to Z Fitness Experts

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- George Stavrou
- Jeremy Markum
- Jesse Cannone
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- Karin Peterson
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Top Arthritis: How to Ease the Pain

One day I was watching a client workout and he mentioned that his knee ached. He had gone to the doctor and nothing was structurally wrong. His doctor suggested he may have the beginnings of arthritis. He was nervous that exercise would make it worse. This is a common misconception that many American think and it just is not true.

The human body is designed for moving. As time move along our joints do succumb to wear and tear. However it does not mean we have to become sedentary. By moving and keeping a solid exercise program you can reduce joint pressure and improve muscular strength. This will reduce your chances of developing arthritis or its friend osteoarthritis.

If you happen to have some sign of arthritis you can ease the pain by applying heat a few different ways. You can use a moist heat pack for 20 minutes. Take a nice hot bath, hit the hot tub or apply a dry heat pad to the pain area. The amount of times you apply this procedure will have an effect on the outcome. I suggest 3 times per day. The heat helps relax the area, improves circulation and aids joint relaxation. Apply cold to an area with sever pain to decreases inflammation. Apply for 20 minutes up to 3 times per day.

There are a few supplement that have gained high recognition for there ability to help arthritis. Glucosamine and Chondroitin are the main supplements that have hit the market. Both act to transfer of water across cell membranes. Chondroitin is a larger molecule and thus is not as effective as Glucosamine.

The other main supplement that I have used and read about is MSM. There have been many studies of this supplement. This supplement reduces inflammation by effecting cortisol. Cortisol is your body's natural inflammation fighter. Recommended dose of MSM varies but the best I could find is 1 gram a day up to 5 grams per day. Check with your doctor before taking any supplements.

To keep arthritis in check we need to exercise our bodies. We must make our muscles strong and keep them active to prevent this crippling disease from ever starting. Exercise keeps the muscles strong and the joints stable. With stable joints the movement pattern stays in balance. The best exercises are of course low impact such as walking and swimming.

As I have talked before posture is essential to reducing joint pain. WHY? When joints are not at there correct axis of rotation within the joint structure the body will over compensate for the lack of mobility by using and abusing other muscles, tendons and ligaments. The added pressure from distorted posture aids in friction and enables arthritis to begin. When standing do not hunch over with your shoulders rounded and you head forward. Keep your head up and your shoulder back. This will also keep your lower half aligned.

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Top 16 Tips For Looking And Feeling Better Than You Have In Years Part I

By David Grisaffi, Corrective Exercise Kinesiologist and Eric Ruth
16 Essential Weight Loss, Health And Fitness Strategies

"How To Get Maximum Weight Loss Fitness Results In Minimum Time" 1. In the beginning, your fitness plan should not be overly aggressive. One of the b iggest problems most people encounter when starting a fitness program is rapidly depleted motivation after only a few weeks due to an overly ambitious fitness plan. Two days per week of 20 -minute low -intensity cardiovascular exercise (walking, jogging, bik ing, swimming); and two days per week of 30 -minute light resistance training (using weights or resistance machines) is adequate in the beginning. As you become acclimated to the lifestyle "shift" you can add more days and get improved results.

But beware:
1.if you try to do too much too fast, you may end up quitting altogether. If you've tried and failed doing it alone, then I suggest you get a training partner or personal trainer who will help you sustain your motivation.

2. If your goal is fat-loss, then your cardiovascular exercise should be low intensity. Your heart rate during cardio exercise should not exceed 50% to 70% of your maximum heart rate. The simple formula for calculating your 100% maximum heart rate is 220 minus your age. If the intensity of your exercise increases your heart rate beyond 70% (which can occur very easily if you are in poor shape), you start shifting from using body fat as your energy source to relying on glucose metabolism. Your personal trainer can supply you with a simple heart rate monitor you can wear during exercise so you always stay in your peak fat-burning range.

3. Don't waste your time working small muscles with isolated movements. If you don't enjoy doing resistance training or are pressed for time, concentrate on working the largest muscle groups with compound resistance movements. When I see overweight people doing wrist curls or lateral raises, I wonder why. It's generally just a lack of understanding of how their bodies work. Most people want to lose fat and tone and firm their bodies. The way to do that is to use resistance (weights or machines) to train the large muscle groups. Men should be concentrating on legs, chest and back. Women should concentrate more on their legs and back. The best exercises for legs are lunges or squats (your personal trainer will show you the proper form and then monitor you during the exercise) and leg press. The best chest exercise is bench press, and the best back exercise is the seated row. All of these are compound movements, which means they incorporate multiple muscle groups.

4. Always, always, always stretch. Stretching improves flexibility, blood flow, muscle recovery, low back pain and a host of other things. Additionally, stretching can prevent injury, make you sleep better and improve your performance in all sports. Always stretch, but be certain not to stretch cold muscles. You should always warm up before stretching. However, it is very important that you know how to stretch. Never bounce! Your personal trainer will show you the proper execution and timing of your stretches.

5. Never, ever do a traditional sit-up. Unless you are a super athlete with an incredibly well-developed midsection, sit-ups can lead to a strained lower back and possibly lumbar injuries. But it gets worse. Rather than hitting your abdominal section, sit-ups can shift exercise tension to your hip flexors - which defeats the purpose. There is so much misinformation about how to strengthen tone and firm the midsection, it's almost frightening. It is very difficult to learn proper abdominal exercise technique by reading about itor watching it demonstrated on a video. You need to do it with supervision and get feedback about your form from a knowledgeable source. And keep in mind that you use your abdominal muscles in almost every single movement you make. Strengthening your abdominal region is the single most effective way to prevent, or recover from, low back pain.

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Top 16 Tips For Looking And Feeling Better Than You Have In Years part II

By David Grisaffi, Corrective Exercise Kinesiologist andEric Ruth

6.Set realistically attainable goals. You must have tangible, quantifiable, short-term and long-term goals for your fitness program so you can gauge your progress. It's crucial to have a "baseline" before you begin, so you can measure success. Your health club or personal trainer can give you a complete fitness analysis (don't be shy - you need this) that will aid you or your trainer in developing a personalized fitness program which addresses your particular needs. Having goals, particularly short-term goals, allows you to track your progress and keep you motivated when times are tough and you don't feel like exercising. Keeping a journal of your cardio and resistance training workouts, as well as tracking what you eat is truly a fitness success "secret." Just remember that your goals should be realistic and attainable. The best way for you to understand what is realistic and attainable for you is to talk to a fitness professional - not to buy into the "hype" of infomercials, diet and fitness products that blatantly mislead.

7. Set exercise appointments with yourself. Use your day-timer to set appointments for exercise - and then stick to them. You wouldn't miss a business meeting or client appointment, would you? So don't miss your exercise appointment with yourself. Nothing is more important than your health. Nothing. Everything else will crumble around you if your health goes south. So make your exercise appointments a priority. If you find it difficult to keep these appointments, then consider hiring a personal trainer who will hold you to your commitment. When you have money invested, and someone waiting for you to show up - you are much more likely to actually show up!

8. Remember the benefits of exercise. Remember that feeling of euphoria you experienced after a particularly good work-out? You experienced that feeling because the most powerful "feel good" drugs in the world -endorphins - are coursing through your veins. If there is a panacea, it's exercise. Nothing feels better than the post-work-out high you experience after exercising. Revel in that feeling. Let it wash over you and truly experience it. Etch that feeling in your brain. It will fuel your motivation on those inevitable days when you just don't feel like exercising. Being physically fit affects every single aspect of your life: you sleep better, eat better, love better, overcome stress better, work better, communicate better, and live better!

9. Exercise correctly. So much time is wasted doing, at best, unproductive exercise, or at worst, dangerous exercise. Get educated on how to exercise correctly. And the absolute best way to do that is to hire a personal trainer to develop a program for you and then teach you what to do and how to do it right. Personal training does not have to be an ongoing process. You can hire a personal trainer for whatever length of time you need to learn the ropes. It could be five sessions, or it could be fifteen sessions. It's completely up to you. But statistics prove that those who understand how to exercise correctly, get better, faster results. And that's what you want, right? Results!

10. Enjoy yourself. The most difficult thing is actually getting into your running shoes or going to the gym. But once you begin your work-out, relax and enjoy the process. Don't fight it. Make exercise your personal time. When you are exercising you can focus completely on yourself. Yes, exercising can and should be somewhat rigorous (depending on your level of fitness), but it is just that investment which makes it supremely rewarding. As with anything, if you are in the moment, you can fully appreciate the experience and truly enjoy the process.

Top 16 Tips For Looking And Feeling Better Than You Have In Years part III

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11. Americans eat too many carbohydrates for our lifestyles. I'm not advocating the high protein, high saturated fat diet that you hear so much about (frankly, it's dangerous). But I am advocating minimizing your intake of bread, pasta, rice, potato and of course, all sugary drinks. We are no longer an agrarian society participating in manual labor. Most of us are fairly sedentary throughout the day and therefore do not need the high levels of carbohydrates to sustain our energy. Additionally, carbohydrates are addictive. The more donuts you eat, the more you want. The bulk of your carbohydrates should come from vegetables and fruit. And those with high water content, such as cucumbers, grapefruit, tomatoes, cantaloupe, strawberries and even vegetable soups (watch out for high sodium), will fill you up nicely. By the way, numerous studies have conclusively proven that the quarter of the population eating the most vegetables gets half the cancer of the quarter eating the least!

12. Deep-fried food has no nutritional value - none! Almost every food, whether it's steak, chocolate or red wine, has some nutrients to contribute. But one thing is absolute: fried foods are garbage. Potato chips, French fries, onion rings, breaded chicken strips and all the rest of the deep-fried junk are pregnant with saturated fat and calories, and they contain almost zero nutritional value. If you're trying to lose weight and/or reduce fat, simply eliminate fried foods completely from your diet. Yikes! That stuff is scary.

13. Never, ever skip breakfast. If you want to maximize your fitness results or fat-loss efforts, you've got to eat breakfast. Even if you don't exercise at all - breakfast remains the most important meal of the day. Your breakfast should contain complete proteins and complex carbohydrates (if you're trying to lose weight, you should eat the bulk of your complex carbohydrates at breakfast and lunch and only have vegetable carbohydrates at dinner). A great breakfast is oatmeal (not the pre-packaged, pre-sweetened kind) with a little honey and banana and a protein drink. Or try scrambled egg whites with Healthy Choice turkey sausage.

14. Eat fat to lose fat. Healthy fats are necessary to your body for a bunch of reasons: regulating hormonal production, improving immune function, lowering total cholesterol, lubricating joints, and providing the basics for healthy hair, nails and skin. The singular distinction you must be aware of is the difference between healthy "good" fats, and dangerous "bad" fats. Good fats are monounsaturated fats like olive, peanut and canola oil, avocados, all natural peanut butter and nuts; and omega-3 fats like salmon and mackerel and soy-based foods. Bad fats are saturated fats, partially hydrogenated fats (killers!), and trans fats. Your personal trainer can provide you with a simple diet program that will complement your exercise to help you live longer, feel better and boost your immune system. The bottom line is that your body needs good fats - and will revolt if you attempt to abstain from them - and absolutely does not need bad fats.

15. Drink plenty of fresh, clean water. Yes, I know that you've heard this over and over again. But there's a reason for that - it's the gospel truth! The recommended amount is approximately eight glasses, or 64 ounces, of water every day. When you are exercising, you need to drink even more. Over 75% of your body is water (even bone is more than 20% water). When you don't drink enough water, and substitute diuretics like coffee, tea and caffeinated sodas, you dehydrate your body, your blood doesn't flow properly and your digestive system doesn't operate smoothly (among other problems). Even a small deficit of water can radically affect how your body performs. Here's a good rule of thumb: if you're urine is a dark yellow and/or has a strong odor, you're not drinking enough water. Drink up!

16. Eat regularly throughout the day. Fasting or overly restrictive diets will enable you to lose weight - in the short run. Because the weight you lose is primarily water weight and lean muscle mass. But in the long-run, it has exactly the opposite effect you want. When you restrict your diet, your body instinctively thinks it's being starved and shifts into a protective mode by storing fat. Energy expenditures are fueled by your lean muscles. Therefore your body fat remains essentially the same and you lose vital fluids and muscle instead. The less muscle you have, the slower your metabolism becomes, and the less fat you burn. You should be eating three nutritionally balanced meals each day, and you should have at least one or two healthy snacks. This keeps your metabolic furnace stoked, so you burn more at a faster rate. I know, it's counter-intuitive, but it's the gospel truth!

There you have it. 16 essential strategies for an effective weight loss and fitness program that will have you looking and feeling better than you have in years - maybe ever!

I realize that starting (or re-starting) a productive and effective health and fitness program is not easy. That's why I encourage you to get help.

If you're sick, you go to the doctor. If you've got a tax problem, you see an accountant (or an attorney!). Have a toothache? You're off to the dentist. Leaky pipes result in a call to the plumber. So why is it that so many people attempt to solve their health and fitness problems without consulting an expert? I don't know exactly, but I encourage you to make the investment in yourself - in your quality of life - by hiring a qualified professional to educate you and help you get started…

…because the hardest part is just getting started and sustaining your motivation until fitness becomes habitual. Once you develop the habit, which can take as little as thirty day, your whole life will change for the better.

If I can be of any assistance to you, please don't hesitate to call me. I'm happy to speak with you and give you my recommendations without any sales pressure (I hate it when people try to "sell" me, so I wouldn't try that on you).

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Top **Exercise of the month: Abdominal Training on a Swiss Ball**

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by David Grisaffi, Corrective Exercise KinesiologistSwiss Ball Core Training

A Fun Look at New Way to Train!

The Swiss ball training for the abdominal region will you increase muscle tone, balance and mid-section function. Adding Swiss ball training to your workouts will definitely improve your look. Swiss ball training not only improves your muscle tone but will also increase your ability to perform other activities.

The Swiss ball differs from your machine training in the fact that it creates an unstable environment. This unstable environment activates your nervous system to get excited and produce more electrical activity. First thing you'll find when working out on a Swiss ball is it tends to be difficult and tiring. This is a byproduct of neutralizer and stabilizer inadequacies.

Neutralizers are muscles that allow you to have smooth movement patterns. Stabilizer's are muscles that surround joints and help prevent injuries. By increasing the amount of electrical stimulation to the Neutralizers and stabilizer musculature we will enhance performance of any given the activity.

The function of our abdominal region is imperative to proper movement. To increase function we must look at the muscles involved in the abdominal core region. The abdominal core is made up of the internal oblique, external oblique, transverse abdominis and the rectus abdominis. Which muscle do you know by name? Most people say the rectus abdominis because it creates the six pack beautiful abdominal look. The problem arises from excessive rectus abdominal exercises's faulty posture and of range of motion deficiencies in the spine.

I like he uses Swiss ball for training the abdominal core. Note: If you have any problems with your low back make sure you place a towel underneath your lumbar spine the thickness of your hand.

Always train the abdominal region like you train any other muscle. The fact most persons exercise the abdominal region following an incomplete and faulty rules for training. Why do we all do 100 sit-ups at a time? Would we do 100 bicep curls? No! That would be thought of as in adequate training.

Train your abdominal region 3 days a week with a day rest in between each session. Always use the correct sequencing of exercises. This allows for your nervous system not to be over burdened. The correct sequencing of exercises are as follows:

-Lower abdominal
-Oblique
-Upper Abdominal

This training routine above is a lengthy article in itself. I will return in the future issue to elaborate on functional training of the core. But for now let's get a basis of some fun and exciting exercises for the core. Here we go! Note: Before engaging in any of these activities please consult your physician if you have any core, dizziness, or any other ailments.

Here is my favorite Swiss ball training routine. I call it the big five!

If you have never done any Swiss ball training be prepared for a sore abdominal region the next day. Just Click on the hyper link below to see how each exercise is properly performed.

Swiss Ball Exercises "THE BIG FIVE"
http://www.fit-zone.com/livinghealthy/swissball5.htm

1-Prone ball roll
2-Supine lateral ball roll
3-Side flexion

4-Prone Jack knife
5-Forward ball roll

Follow this routine three days a week and you'll see muscle tone like you never seen it before!

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Top **WHERE DIETS GO WRONG**

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When we discover that we are heavier than we want to be, we have a natural inclination to eat less food. We may skip lunch or eat only a tiny amount of our dinner in the hope that if we eat less our body will burn off some of its fat. But that is not necessarily true. Eating less actually makes it more difficult to lose weight.

Keep in mind that the human body took shape millions of years ago, and at that time there were diets. The only low-calorie event in people's lives was starvation. Those who could cope with a temporary lack of food were the ones who survived. Our bodies, therefore, have developed this built-in mechanism to help us survive in the face of low food intake.

When researchers compare overweight and thin people, they find that they ear roughly the same number of calories. What makes overweight people different is the amount of fat that they eat. Thin people tend to eat less fat and more complex carbohydrates.

Losing weight is not something one can do overnight. A carefully planned weight loss program requires common sense and certain guidelines. Unfortunately, there's a lot of misinformantion floating around and lots of desperate people are easily duped and ripped off.

Every day one can open a magazine or newspaper and see advertisements touting some new product, pill or patch that will take excess weight off quickly. Everyone seems to be looking for that "magic" weight loss pill. Millions of Americans are trying to lose weight, spending billions of dollars every year on diet programs and products. Often they do lose some weight.

But, if you check with the same people five years later, you will find that nearly all have regained whatever weight they lost. A survey was done recently to try and determine if any commercial diet program could prove long-term success. Not a single program could do so. So rampant has the so-called diet industry become with new products and false claims that the FDA has now stepped in and started clamping down.

Being seriously overweight and particularly obesity can develop into a number of diseases and serious health problems, and it is now a known fact that when caloric intake is excessive, some of the excess frequently is saturated fat.

The myth is that people get heavy by eating too many calories. Calories are a consideration it’s true, but overall they are not the cause of obesity in America today. Americans actually take in fewer calories each day than they did at the beginning of the century. If calories alone were the reason we become overweight, we should all be thin. But we are not. Collectively, we are heavier than ever. Partly, it is because we are more sedentary now. But equally, as important is the fact that the fat content of the American diet has changed dramatically.

People who diet without exercising often get fatter with time. Although your weight may initially drop while dieting, such weight loss consists mostly of water and muscle. When the weight returns, it comes back as fat. To avoid getting fatter over time, increase your metabolism by exercising regularly.

Select an exercise routine that you are comfortable with and remember that walking is one of the best and easiest exercises for strengthening your bones, controlling your weight and toning your muscles.

Top

NOTE:
David has written an excellent abdominal trainin g e-book called :
David Grisaffi's Guide to Flatten Your Abs .
Click here for more information.

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Top Shin Splints

This term is used to describe pain along the shin (tibia) and is commonly seen as an overuse injury in runners. Shin splints develop gradually over a period of weeks to months, but sometimes can occur after just one heavy workout or exercise. The pain is usually felt in one of two places: on the back of the inside of the lower leg (posterior shin splints) or on the outside of the front of the lower leg next to the bone (tibia). These are called anterior shin splints.

The pain is usually more noticeable as you start to exercise, then decreases or goes away as exercise continues. After you stop and cool down, the pain usually re-occurs and will be even more intense upon arising in the morning.

Both types of shin splints are caused by inappropriate or too intense training and/or abnormal biomechanics

Both forms of shin splints can occur because you don't plan sufficient rest time between activities. Most exercise programs dictate a slow, progressive increase in volume and intensity over a long period of time. A sudden jump in volume, overloads your ability to heal during rest, and injury may result. One of the most important concepts to understand is that it is not exercise that makes you stronger, but when you rest your body after strenuous workouts. Exercise breaks the muscles down, and as they heal during rest they become stronger.

Abnormal biomechanics can be the cause of posterior shin splints. Over-pronation of your foot during running causes undue stress on the muscular attachment to the tibia causing inflammation. Tight calf muscles and flat feet can also contribute. With posterior shin splints, it is usually just one leg that is involved.

Anterior shin splints often occur in both legs. They can happen when you are just beginning a running program, or from downhill running, or participating in sports requiring rapid starts and stops. These conditions cause damage to the tibialis anterior muscle, resulting in pain.

Before starting self-treatment, check with your doctor, who will diagnose the injury after conducting an exam. The doctor may also order x-rays to rule out stress fractures, which can mimic the symptoms of shin splints. The doctor may prescribe anti-inflammatory medication, such as ibuprofen.

Treatment usually begins with rest. Often you can continue some activities but not at the intensity as you did before the injury. Ice is also an excellent healing intervention. Freeze ice in styrofoam cups. Remove the top inch of the cup; turn it upside down; and apply the ice in a circular motion up and down the muscles, especially near the tibia. Continue the ice massage for about ten minutes. The circular motion helps relax the muscles and does not cause ice burns which could happen if you left the ice in one place right on the skin. Do this several times a day.

Gradual stretching, particularly the soleus and gastrocnemius (calf) increases flexibility and can prevent

the injury from returning.

Deep tissue massage is one of the most effective techniques for getting rid of shin splints. The massage therapist will breakdown the thick, tight muscles and smooth and elongate them. This technique gets rid of the pain and helps assure that the injury does not return.

For long distance runners, examining the tread of your shoes can give a clue as to abnormal biomechanics. Uneven wear when comparing one shoe to another, may signal abnormal motion in one leg. If you notice uneven wear on your shoes, you may want to check with a professional to see if your biomechanics can be improved. A chiropractor may be able to determine postural issues that could contribute to shin splints caused by biomechanical issues.

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Rotator Cuff Injuries

By Doc Warnock

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The shoulder is a very complex joint. It is comprised of a ball (humeral head) and a socket (glenoid). The other joint of the shoulder is the acromioclavicular joint. All this means that a lot of tendons and ligaments and attachments comprise the shoulder where things can go wrong with improper use of the shoulder.

The shoulder joint is stabilized by the rotator cuff. The rotator cuff is comprised of four muscles: The supraspinatus (along the top of the shoulder), the infraspinatus (on the scapular), the teres major (crosses from the shoulder to the humerus in the arm) and the subscapularis (under the pectoral muscle). The biceps tendon, because of its involvement with the rotator cuff muscles, can also be irritated.

Rotator cuff tears may involve one or all of the rotator cuff muscles and essentially involve separation of their attachment onto their respective bony prominences. The most commonly involved tendon in rotator cuff tears is the supraspinatus tendon. Tendinitis is the most common complaint due to excessive overhead motions and/or poor mechanics when throwing or using the shoulder joint. In athletics, a tear may occur by an overuse syndrome caused by throwing too many pitches, or excessive force placed against the shoulder in external rotation, as in football.

Symptoms include pain along the outside aspect of the shoulder, more significantly at night and with attempts at raising the arm. Elevating and externally rotating the arm becomes very painful. If the sequence of movement (irritation, fraying, and inflammation) is repeated often enough, the rotator cuff tendons are at risk and may in fact rupture with a relatively minor stressful event.

Treatment starts with rest to allow any inflammation to lessen. A series of range of motion exercises are generally begun after the acute stage to prevent stiffness. At the point where there is no pain, a rehabilitation program should be initiated to assure that all tendons and ligaments are being held in their proper place and strength returns to all parts.

Many people wait far to long before seeking help with shoulder problems. Some athletes have suffered shoulder problems for a year or more before actually doing something about it…usually too late. It is far better to take preventive steps to assure that this complicated joint remains stable and fully usable.

Icing down your shoulder after rigorous use, such as pitching a softball game or playing a round of tennis (or painting a ceiling) can help. A massage therapist can also help by removing muscle spasm, lengthening shortened and tight muscles, and assisting in improving range of motion. Increased circulation to the area also helps keep the joint in good health.

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Plantar Fasciitis

Injury Prevention and Rehabilitation

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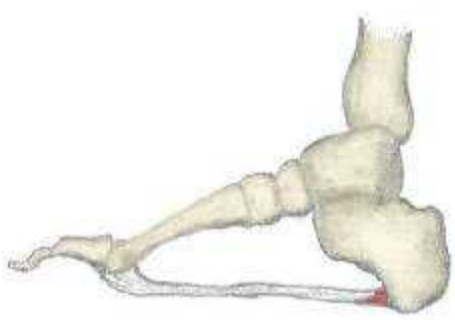
There are more than 70 different injuries that can put an athlete out of commission. I am going to discuss these injuries and how to prevent them in the various instalments of this column. It is my belief that the serious athlete needs to understand what can happen to his/her body as a result of training and conditioning, as well as the everyday wear and tear on muscles, tendons, ligaments, fascia and other soft tissue. An awareness of what can happen because of overuse, improper training, poor posture, and other factors can help the athlete avoid such catastrophes. By the way, I define an “athlete” as anyone who moves a lot. If you have ever watched a housepainter or a bricklayer or a delivery person, it is quite obvious that they put they bodies through some very rigorous workouts. So welcome aboard all you worker bees.



We’ll start with the feet and work our way up the body. This week I am going to discuss Plantar Fasciitis, a common injury particular with runners and jumpers, although this condition can happen to anyone.

The plantar fascia is a broad band of tough fibrous tissue on the bottom of your foot , beginning at your heel and ending at your toes. Inflammation of this structure is called Plantar Fasciitis and is usually felt as pain in the arch, near the heel.

Plantar Fasciitis is usually caused by over-use, poor ankle flexibility, weak ankles or over-pronation, which is often caused by too-tight calf muscles or weak muscles in and around the foot. Many athletes ignore their feet until an injury occurs, but when you think about it, your feet are one of the most important structures in your body, bearing all your weight all the time. If you jump as part of your sport, such as basketball, track and field events, and tennis, you need to include sound preventative measures to assure your feet will always be able to perform the way you ask.

What causes Plantar Fasciitis? With each step forward, all of your body weight first rests on the heel of one foot. As your weight moves forward, your whole foot begins to bear all your body's weight, and your foot flattens. This places a great deal of strain on the plantar fascia. The plantar is tough tissue so there is very little "give". Whereas it stretches only slightly, it pulls on its attachment near your heel. If your foot is properly aligned this pull causes no problems. However, if your foot is "pronated" (the foot rolls inward…look at the bottom of your shoe for signs of extra wearing), your arch falls excessively, and this causes an abnormal stretching of the relatively inflexible plantar fascia, which in turn pulls abnormally hard on the heel.

The symptoms of Plantar Fasciitis include pain in the heel and foot. The pain is often worse upon arising in the morning and becomes more bearable as the day progresses. Sometimes the pain subsides during the day but often gets worse depending on the amount of walking you do. If the injury is cause by over-pronation, there may be more pain as the arch ligament is stretched more, putting more strain on it.

Diagnosis is made by a physician who may include an x-ray to determine if there is a lesion in the tissue or bone or any bone growths (calcification).

Once Plantar Fasciitis is the diagnosis, traditional medical treatment may include the prescribing of anti-inflammatory medications, orthotics, taping of the foot, and rest. Once the inflammation subsides, strength and flexibility exercises may be prescribed to strengthen the foot.

Using the traditional model, you would first seek advise from a physician. He or she may also refer you to a physical therapist for various treatments. You may also work with an athletic trainer, who can tape your foot to minimize damage and, if you have access to a strength and conditioning coach, he or she can design an appropriate workout to strengthen your foot and ankle.

There are also complimentary practitioners who can help once the diagnosis is made. A chiropractor may be able to help by adjusting your hip and/or leg so pronation could be minimized. While it is your foot that hurts, the injury may be caused by other factors including improperly-aligned hips or pelvis, poorly tracking knees and other alignment issues.

A massage therapist can help reduce the stress on the plantar and associated muscles by using deep tissue and stripping techniques and by massaging the entire foot and leg, paying particular attention to calf muscles, soleus, anterior and posterior tibialis, quads and hamstrings. The massage helps elongate the plantar fascia thereby reducing the stress on its attachments. Trigger points in and around the foot may also be identified by the therapist and reduced and scar tissue may be addressed.

At home, contrast baths can help reduce the inflammatory process, once the acute stage is over. A contrast bath is a very simple procedure. Fill two small buckets, one with very warm water and one with ice water. Place your foot in the hot water for approximately 60 seconds. Immediate plunge your foot into the ice water bucket for the same length of time. Repeat this procedure 5 or 6 times, always ending with the cold water. This process helps flush our debris and metabolic wastes and reduces inflammation as fresh, oxygenated blood is flushed in and out of your foot.

The best way to prevent Plantar Fasciitis is to keep your foot and ankle flexible. Proper warm-up and stretching both before and after competition or conditioning will help keep the tendon from tightening. Rolling your foot over the edge of a step or using a small round dowel or bottle will also be beneficial. Start the rolling at the heel and roll up to your toes and back, repeating the process for several minutes. Carry a short, round pole (a piece of closet pole is perfect) in your sport bag so you can use it whenever you plan to exercise or purchase a “footsy Roller” or similar product at your local sporting goods store.

Preventing Plantar Fasciitis is far easier than rehabilitation from this condition. Untreated, this condition can become chronic and prevent you from participating in your favorite activities. You need to take care of those poor feet. They do a lot of work.

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Game, Set, Match…

Tendinitis is the swelling or inflammation that occurs as a result of the tendons of the forearm tearing away from the medial or lateral epicondyle. An epicondyle is a bony protuberance on either side of the

elbow. To find them, bend your elbow. Place your thumb on the inside and your first finger on the outside and bend your elbow back and forth. You should feel the bumps.
Tendinitis can occur wherever tendons are located, but tendonitis occurs most often at the outside of the elbows. When that occurs, it is called tennis elbow. When tendonitis occurs on the inside of the elbows, it is called golfer's elbow. To help prevent tendinitis, warm-up for at least five minutes prior to any athletic activity. Sometimes a protective sleeve will keep the tendons from separating.

WHAT IS TENNIS ELBOW?
Tennis elbow is a condition where inflammation of the tendons (tendinitis) attached to the outside, or lateral side, of the elbow at a bony prominence of the arm bone (humerus). .Muscles which work the wrist and fingers turn into a tendon which attaches to this area. This bony prominence is called the lateral epicondyle, hence this condition is also called "lateral epicondylitis."

If you develop tennis elbow, you will feel pain on the outside (lateral) aspect of the elbow. The pain can radiate or travel into the forearm and occasionally the hand. The pain usually occurs when you try to grasp an object and may be accompanied by a sense of weakness. You may also experience discomfort at rest. When picking up an object or at night. Once the tendons become inflamed, it can be difficult to fix because those tendons are used every time you try to grab or squeeze something…like a tennis racquet..

WHAT CAUSES TENNIS ELBOW?
Injury to these tendons results from repetitive activity in which the tendons are "overloaded." This situation can happen from sports and/or work, or from a change in one's regular activity. The "overload" of tendons happens with those who play tennis more than usual (or workers using the same movements over and over) and then develops pain at the outer aspect of the elbow (thus the common name "tennis elbow"). A similar condition can develop on the inner or medial side of the elbow (medial epicondylitis). Since this condition is fairly common in golfers on their non-dominant arm, it is also called "golfers elbow."

HOW IS IT TREATED?
In most cases, your doctor will examine your elbow and may take X-rays to evaluate the bones and joints of the elbow. If the problem is determined to be lateral epicondylitis, then treatment usually consists of modifying the activity, icing the area, and taking anti-inflammatory medications.

The most important activity is stretching and strengthening the involved muscles and tendons. Gentle stretching helps flush out the fluid that causes the inflammation. Taking your elbow through its range of motion will also help. Putting your elbow in a sling slows down circulation and lengthens the rehabilitation process.

Massage therapy can be a great help. The therapist will massage your shoulder, rotator cuff, upper arm and lower arm, thereby increasing your range of motion and relieving the stress and tension in your arm and shoulder.

Medial epicondylitis (golfer's elbow) is inflammation at the point where the tendons of the forearm attach to the bony prominence of the inner elbow. This tendon can become strained in a golf swing, but many other repetitive motions can injure the tendon. You will feel local pain and tenderness over the inner elbow. Twisting or straining the forearm tendon can elicit pain and worsen the condition.

Again, the best treatment is to apply ice, perform a program of gentle stretches, and anti-inflammatory medication.

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Anterior Cruciate Ligament Strain

Some of the more common injuries that occur happen in the knee. The knee is quite weak in terms of its bony arrangement. The stability of the knee is mostly governed by the ligaments and tendons that attach

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to the knee. Ligaments connect bone to bone and tendons connect muscle to bone. The knee has two primary motions - flexion and extension (up and down). There is a little movement into rotation and to a lesser degree some lateral (sideways) motions. It is for these reasons that most of the injuries to the knee occur. When the knee is subjected to stresses that are more than it is designed or conditioned to take, injury often occurs. There are usually two kinds of injuries in the knee. One is a traumatic injury. This happens in contact sports like football. The other type of injury is often caused by a sudden change in direction or quick movement. This also explains why activities that require a lot of cutting and pivoting have such a higher incidence of knee injury.

One of the more common knee injuries is a sprain to one of the stabilizing ligaments. A sprain is stretching a ligament further than it was designed that may cause varying degrees of tearing. This usually happens as a result of a planted foot and either a twist, a hyperextension, and/or an outside force directed at the knee with the foot planted. Pain is usually immediate and there will be some feelings of apprehension or an inability to bear weight on that leg.

The knee has four ligaments holding it in place, one at each side to stop the bones sliding sideways and two crossing over inside the knee to stop the bones sliding forwards and backwards. The latter two are called the cruciate ligaments, the posterior cruciate ligament (PCL) and anterior cruciate ligament (ACL). If damaged they may cause knee pain.

One of the more commonly injured ligaments is the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL). This is considered the key component in the knee joint and is crucial for guiding the tibia in a normal path along the end of the femur. Often the athlete remembers hearing a 'pop' as the injury occurs and there are instant feelings of instability or giving way.

Anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injuries occur most frequently in planting and cutting sports such as basketball, soccer, football and volleyball as well as martial arts, running and dancing. Three main non-contact activities can cause injury to the ACL: planting and cutting, straight-knee landing, and one-step stop landing with the knee hyper extended . Pivoting and sudden deceleration are also common mechanisms of non-contact ACL injury.

The symptoms of an ACL injury are: pain at the time of contact; swelling, a “popping” sound, pain when you bend the knee and a feeling that there is no strength in the knee. Often, the injured person hesitates to put any weight on that leg..

In order to effectively diagnose the injury, your doctor will want to know: what type of movement caused the pain (pivoting, hyperextension, etc.); if you felt a “pop”; how quickly the swelling occurred; how severe the initial pain was; and if you could or could no put weight on it right after the injury. He or she will probably order an x-ray or MRI to determine the degree of injury

For Grade I and Grade II ACL sprains, the initial treatment follows the RICE rule: Rest, ice, compress and elevate. Your doctor may also suggest you wear a knee brace, and that you take a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug, such as ibuprofen, to relieve pain and ease swelling Once the pain subsides, your doctor will prescribe an aggressive rehabilitation program to strengthen the muscles in and around the knee as well as any muscle, tendon, or ligament that involves the knee. Depending on the severity of the injury, the rehabilitation period can be anywhere from several weeks to several months or more. Your best friend during the rehabilitation process will be your physical therapist or personal trainer.

Treatment also depends on your activity level. Surgery may be used for those needing to return to sports that involve pivoting and jumping. Bracing can also be used during the rehab process and even beyond for some athletes. Surgery is also a possibility, but, unless you have to return to your sport very quickly, it would be best to try other rehabilitation procedures first.

Can massage help? Yes, after the acute stage and once the initial swelling has subsided, massage around the area and to the upper leg can increase circulation which is the primary healing agent; reduce soreness caused by the rehabiliation process, which usually involves resistance lifting, and improve over-all flexibility and range of motion.

To prevent ACL injuries, and other knee injuries, plan a good program of stretching to improve range of motion and to allow the muscles, tendons, and ligaments to lengthen allowing more “give” to your knee. Strengthening your quad, hamstring, adductors and vastis muscles will assure that your knee will stay in its position. Avoid sudden increases in your training and wear well-fitting shoes. This is winter and if you ski, make sure you use two mode release bindings that are properly adjusted to your foot.

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Iliotibial Band Friction Syndrome

Iliotibial Band Friction Syndrome is considered a knee injury for the most part. The Iliotibial Band is a thick tendinous material starting at the outer rim of the pelvis. It then travels down the side of the leg, over the outside of the knee, and attaches to the outside of the large shinbone.

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Iliotibial Band Friction Syndrome (ITB) pain comes from inflammation of the band as it rubs up against the outer part of the knee joint. The underlying bursa may also be affected.

The symptoms of ITB Friction Syndrome usually come on gradually. This condition usually occurs in runners, dancers, aerobic dancers, skiers, and cyclists. Symptoms include tightness on the outer side of the knee. You can also get a burning feeling, especially while running. There is greater pain when you walk down a flight of stairs or run downhill. If the pain gets too bad, you will not want to bend your leg so you will walk with that leg straight all the time.

ITB Friction Syndrome is caused by excessive bending and straightening of the knee. Squats can also cause the syndrome to happen. Runners who run in a set pattern and on uneven surfaces can be susceptible. People with bowed legs are also susceptible. Over-use is another cause.
Once diagnosed, the doctor will probably prescribe an anti-inflammatory medication and tell you to ice your knee several times a day. If the injury is severe enough, the physician may also prescribe a brace.

If you are rehabilitating this condition on your own, be sure to stop the activity until the acute pain subsides. Use ice and ibuprofen or other over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medication. After the acute stage, begin a stretching program to increase flexibility in the tendon. Mild cases can be cleared up in 5 to 7 days but severe cases, where the person has not sought treatment, could last six months or more. Here are two stretches that be utilized to heal Iliotibial Band Friction Syndrome.

1. Stand with good erect posture with the side to be stretched next to the wall.
2. Put your arm on wall above shoulder level.
3. Lean your hips toward the wall keeping trunk erect and hold.
4. Return to the starting position, relax, and repeat.

1. Lie on a high table or platform on non-involved side with your back at the edge of the surface.
2. Bend your non-involved knee and hip.
3. Slide your leg back off the edge and keep your knee straight.
4. Let gravity take your leg down toward floor and hold it there.
5. Return to the starting position, relax, and repeat

Lawrence E. “Doc” Warnock is a nationally certified and licensed massage therapist with more than 25 years experience working with athletes and others suffering from soft tissue injuries and conditions. He owns and operates a clinic, “The Center for Health & Athletic Performance, Inc., in Reading, MA where he treats athletes at all levels including high school, college, semi-pro, pro, Olympians, and weekend warriors. He is also a certified Rehabilitation Counselor specializing in cognitive therapy. He has served

as national president of several counseling and massage therapy organizations and is a Mary Switzer Fellow. He uses his psychological background to help athletes overcome injury fears, anxiety, and teaches stress management with athletes and visualization.

He is a member of the faculty at Tufts University in Medford, MA where he teaches a popular undergraduate course called, “Bodyworks.” He also contracts with the University’s Health Services to provide massage services for students and staff with stress-related conditions and sports injuries. Doc hosts a website for high school student/athletes at http://www.chap.com. Doc is also creating a series of e-books on injury prevention, flexibility and range of motion, and other topics of interest to athletes at all levels. You may reach him at doc@chap.com.

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- Beginner Body Comp Program Phase 1
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A Training-Diet Strategy Part I

Use your activity levels to determine your eating plan.

By George Stavrou

Part 1 of 2

Another year has gone by and another New Year Resolution to lose fat and get in shape has begun. The first couple of weeks go really well. You've dropped weight the last two weeks. You are feeling AND looking better. You think that this is THE YEAR that you will FINALLY reach your health and fitness goals when all of a sudden you reach a plateau and can't lose anymore fat. In fact, you are actually GAINING weight. We've all been on this Merry-go-round before. If you are like most people – you are not experiencing the results that you are looking for on a consistent basis. Well, have I got a diet plan for you! What? ANOTHER DIET PLAN! Well, my friend, this is a different approach that you may have not tried yet. Instead of suggesting macronutrient and caloric numbers, I have a few other ideas in mind. Of course, without knowing more about you and how your body responds, it is difficult to choose the correct levels for you, but the following strategy should help nonetheless.

Okay, here are the changes I want you to make to your current eating plan. There are 2 main areas that we are going to manipulate:

1. Daily caloric intake and
2. Caloric intake of each meal

Look at your current training program and break the training days down into Heavy Days, Moderate Days, and Light Days. I have a simple guide to do this. Let's use the agonist/antagonist approach to training body parts - this is a simple yet effective split that works well in the context of this eating plan. Basically, you are training opposite muscles on the same day. For example; Legs/Abs are considered Heavy Days, Chest/Back are Moderate Days, and Arms/Shoulders are Light Days.

How does this fit into your current diet? I am glad you asked.

- On Heavy Days you will be consuming the most amount of calories above your maintenance.
- Moderate Days you will be consuming a moderate amount of calories above maintenance.
- Light Days you will be consuming a minimal amount of calories above maintenance.

If you are like most people, you are probably consuming the same amount of calories on a daily basis regardless of your activity for that particular day. What I am recommending is that on your Heavy Days you take 600 calories above maintenance, Moderate Days you would go with 400 calories above maintenance and Light Days would be 200 calories above maintenance.

Follow a 3 day split from Monday to Friday and train the same body part once every 6-7 days (depending on external stress levels and recovery ability.) When you break it down the numbers look like this:

- Heavy Day - 3,300 calories (2,700 + 600) - approx. 22% above maintenance
- Moderate Day - 3,100 calories (2,700 + 400) - approx. 15% above maintenance

- Light Day - 2,900 calories (2,700 + 200) - approx. 7.5% above maintenance

Training and caloric intake for an average 200 pound trainee should look like this:

Monday	Day 1	Chest/Back	3,100 calories
Tuesday	Day 2	off	2,700 calories
Wednesday	Day 3	Legs/Abs	3,300 calories
Thursday	Day 4	off	2,700 calories
Friday	Day 5	Shoulders/Arms	2,900 calories
Saturday	Day 6	12 Hour Cheat Period	(Mandatory) ? calories
Sunday	Day 7	relax and socialize.	(Optional) 1,500 calories ·

Weekly caloric intake (excluding weekends) is: 13,500

Average daily caloric intake is: 2,700 (13,500/5)

Why am I proposing this? I'll tell ya'. As I am sure you know by now the body is an extremely adaptive organism. Regardless of what you subject it to, it usually stops working after several weeks - be it training, diet, supplementation, etc. By manipulating your caloric intake according to your training for that particular day, you are doing a number on your metabolic rate.

If you paid close attention to the numbers, you probably noticed that on Day 5, a light day is inserted with a relatively low caloric prescription. Why? To get ready for the 12 hour cheat period. According to Dr.'s Eric Serrano and Mauro DiPasquale it is beneficial to have a cheat period occasionally. This helps to relieve some stress by consuming foods that you normally do not eat. Come the weekend, those muscles will soak up the calories that much faster. Let the Carbohydrate loading begin!
Confused yet? Wait, there's more! You almost forgot about the second change we will be making. Many diets recommend that one consume an equal amount of calories per meal. For example, if your caloric intake is 2,400 calories/day then you would be taking in 400 calories per meal for 6 meals.

Well, what if I told you that there is a better way of shocking your body and taking it to the next level. This approach is offered in the ISSA's "Fitness: The Complete Guide" edited by Dr. Fred Hatfield (aka Dr. Squat for those in the power lifting game - and the first man to squat over 1,000 lbs.!).

Dr. Squat suggests the following (and I quote): "When you sit down to eat, ask yourself, 'What am I going to be doing for the next three hours of my life?' Then, if you're taking a nap, eat less; if you're planning on a training session, eat more. And so forth" (ISSA: The Complete Guide Unit 6 - p. 165).

Dr. Squat's recommendations follow below:

"Calories in meal preceding strenuous workouts:	(Add 300 calories to average meal)
Calories in meal preceding moderate workouts:	(add 200 calories to average meal)
Calories in meal preceding vigorous activity:	(add 100 calories to average meal)
Calories in meal preceding moderate activity:	(average meal)
Calories in meal preceding light activity:	(subtract 100 calories from average meal)
Calories in meal preceding relaxing periods:	(subtract 200 calories from average meal)
Calories in meal preceding a nap:	(subtract 300 calories from average meal)"

(ISSA: The Complete Guide Unit 6 - p. 165)

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In the second part of this article I will explain the rationale behind this approach and will discuss the importance of Post-Workout nutrition. In the meantime, I suggest that you determine YOUR maintenance caloric level and plug the number into the chart above.

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Top A Training-Diet Strategy Part II

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Use your activity levels to determine your eating plan.
By George Stavrou

Part 2 of 2
In last week.s article I discussed the concept of manipulating your:

1. Daily caloric intake and
2. Caloric intake of each meal

to maximize your fat loss results and boost your metabolism. In the conclusion of this article I will give you the reasoning behind this approach.

What is the rationale behind a structure like this? Well, let me answer this question with another. Does it make sense for you to eat the same amount per meal if your activity changes every 3 hours? Or, should the calories preceding a tough leg workout be greater than the calories preceding a nap for 20 minutes? In my book, there is a huge difference!

By manipulating your calories this way, you have enough energy to get through the next few hours without putting on fat. It also psychologically prepares you for the upcoming activity since your calories, in essence, dictate the intensity. Feel guilty about eating too much in one sitting? Well then, get off yo' butt and work it off!

It's 6 am - time to roll out of bed and down some coffee. Again, assuming 3, 300 calories for the day (where an average meal is 550 kcals), your meals would look something like this:

Time	Upcoming Activity	Type of Activity	Calories
6 am	Leg Workout	Strenuous Workout	850 (550 + 300)
9 am	Work	Vigorous Activity	650 (550 + 100)
12 pm	More Boring Work	Vigorous Activity	650 (550 + 100)
3 pm	Mid-day Nap	Dead to the world	250 (550 - 300)
6 pm	Am I still Working?	Vigorous Activity	650 (550 + 100)
9 pm	Bed - time	Dead to the World	250 (550 - 300)
		Total Calories for the Day:	3,300

An area that I would like you to look at before embarking on this program is post-workout nutrition. After reading articles by low-carbohydrate proponents, Dr. Eric Serrano and Dr. Mauro DiPasquale, I realized that including glutamine in your post-workout shake would help considerably in reducing the feelings of fatigue in addition to speeding up your recovery between workouts. I suggest starting with 20 grams and adjust accordingly from there. Also, the importance of branched-chain amino acids (BCAA's) cannot be overstated. They play a role prior to, during, and post-workout.

There are a number of companies that have great BCAA.s on the market i.e. Beverly International, Xtreme Formulations just to name a few. ICE, by Xtreme Formulations, contains an ideal ratio of BCAA's to glutamine and is highly recommended.

I suggest you manipulate your intake according to the intensity of activity. For instance, I propose the following:

> "Take your total body weight less your body fat percentage and multiple it by 0.20. The number that you are left with is the number of grams of ICE to ingest. Mix the entire dose with water and sip throughout your workout, or divide into two equal portions to be taken 30 minutes before and after training. It is estimated that the minimum dosage that can be used while maintaining a protein sparing effect is 0.05 grams per pound of lean body mass."

Use the .2 figure for heavy days and the .05 number for light days (multiply by .1-.15 for moderate days.) So, you see, activity levels can also influence supplementation.

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You can use the same approach in calculating how much to take of Beverly International's supplements. Beverly's Baca's come in tablet form and may be tough to swallow for some so I recommend that you take them throughout your workout instead of all at once. It will be much easier on your system this way. If cost is a factor then I suggest that you use the Baca's only on your heavier days.

To sum it up in a nutshell, the Training Diet Strategy works like this:

1. Determine your base caloric intake
2. Classify your training according to Heavy, Moderate, and Light Days
3. Adjust your calories depending on the training for that day (see the formula used above) Adjust your calories/meal depending on the activity you plan on engaging in for the next 3 hours (see Dr. Squats' suggestions used above)
4. Reduce your caloric intake significantly on the day before the weekend to prepare for the feasting that is about to occur
5. Use glutamine and BCAA's in your post-workout nutrition to reduce feelings of fatigue and to promote faster recovery

Give this diet a shot for the next 6-8 weeks. I am sure you'll be happy with the results.

Final thoughts:

Now if you really want to do a number on your metabolic system you can try any or all of the following:

1. Adapt the idea of manipulating calories to some of the other popular diets out there e.g. The Isocaloric Diet (by the late Dan Duchaine), The Zone Diet, etc.
2. Stick with one diet plan for a period of time, say 3-4 months, while changing your training, then move on to another diet for the same amount of time.
3. Change diets every time you change your training.
4. Combine the above steps. Plan a long-term diet and training program where you cycle your diets and training programs. An example is shown below.

Diet #	Training Program #
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

Now for the fun part. Go back to Training Program 1 but instead of using the first diet program use the next one instead. This would look like:

Diet #	Training Program #

2	1
3	2
4	3
5	4
1	5

The next cycle would have you starting on Diet 3 - Training Program 1 and would repeat until completed.

Diet #	Training Program #
2	1
3	2
4	3
5	4
1	5

Words of wisdom - question the status quo. Unless you are the lead dog the view is always the same!

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Top **Beginner Body Comp Program Phase 1**,

In this article, I will give you a preview of what to expect from my upcoming book “How YOU Can Sculpt A Leaner, Healthier Body In 12 Weeks!” slated for release in Spring 2004. Below is Phase 1 of the Beginner Program for fat loss.

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Keep in mind the following:
- There are 10 exercises for this workout
- 5 circuits
- 2 exercises per circuit denoted by A1 and A2. For those of you that are unfamiliar with this designation, you perform a superset with exercise A1 – followed immediately (meaning no rest!) by exercise A2 then you rest for the time shown before moving onto B1 and B2. Repeat until you have completed all 5 supersets.
- 15-20 reps per set
- 1-2 sets per exercise depending on your time and current condition
- 60 s Rest Interval between super-sets
- performed 3X/week – every other day

With a program like this I suggest starting off with a lighter weight than you think you can handle comfortably for the 15 reps. The focus here is on getting at least the minimum number of repetitions in – not how much weight you can lift. When you can do 15 reps on all 10 exercises, I recommend adjusting the resistance in the next workout to ensure that the weight 'feels' the same with each exercise. For example, you don't want to barely get 15 reps on the Wide Stance BB Squat while stopping at 15 reps in the Seated Military Press and realizing that you have another 10 reps in reserve. I want you to have about 2-3 reps in reserve on ALL the exercises with the initial workout so take that into consideration when modifying the weight for the next session.

Enough talking – let's get down to business!

A1 Quads – Wide Stance BB Squats
A2 Upper Back – 1 arm rows abducted

B1 Hams – lying db leg curl
B2 Chest – SB pushups

C1 Lower Back – back extension
C2 Shoulders – seated military press

D1 abs – ab crunch
D2 biceps - bb curls

E1 calves – seated db calf raise
E2 triceps – lying db triceps extension

For those of you that are not familiar with the exercises I highly recommend picking up a copy of Bill Pearl's great book "Getting Stronger". The book comes complete with a number of exercises in addition to illustrations that describe how to perform the movement. You can purchase this book by visiting http://www.billpearl.com/

I would like to thank my Mentor, Mr. John Paul Catanzaro of Body Essence for designing this and the other exercise programs in my book. Visit www.bodyessence.ca for more information on how he can help YOU with your fitness goals!

Yours in health and fitness,
George Stavrou
President, Body Sculpting Corp.

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Top Supplement Hierarchy

Take this pill for fat-loss. Take another pill to magically build muscle over-night. Here's one that will instantly give you more energy than you know what to do with. Many vitamin and supplement companies make outrageous claims about the benefits that you get from taking their specialized formulas. Are these companies really watching out for your best interests or are they just after your hard earned dollar? Don't believe all the hype out there about the 'magic pill' that will make up for a poor diet and lack of exercise.

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You still need to eat healthy and exercise regularly. After you have made nutrition and training a regular part of your health and fitness program then it's time to consider additional supplementation.

Before I give you my top 7 supplements we should consider what the word 'supplement' means. 'Supplement' is defined as: in addition to, not instead of. I can not emphasize this enough. Once you have implemented the proper diet and exercise into your lifestyle it's time to consider additional supplementation.

As good as any nutrition plan is it's difficult, if not impossible, to get ALL the nutrients from your diet. Don't believe what some 'experts' say – you can't get everything you need from your diet. Especially if it consists mainly of processed foods. Below are what I consider the top 7 supplements one should be taking on a regular basis. Amounts may vary from time to time depending on your training, nutrition, stress, etc. but these are considered the foundation of many supplement plans.

Multivitamin/Mineral
Antioxidant
Vitamin C
Protein Powder
Essential Fatty Acids (specifically fish oils)
Glutamine
Zinc and Magnesium formulation
Multivitamin/mineral

This is the first thing that I recommend to ALL of my clients. Did you know that the majority of people eat the same 15-20 foods on a regular basis? Some do not even eat that many. What happens when you do not have enough variety in your diet is that a vitamin and/or mineral deficiency can arise. To combat this I highly recommend a Multivitamin/Mineral supplement as a bare minimum in your supplement plan.

There are some formulations out there that are either strictly a multivitamin or multimineral. There MAY be times when you want one or the other but I recommend taking something that has the full spectrum of vitamins **and** minerals – you want to ensure that all your bases are covered. When looking for a Multivitamin/mineral you want one that has all the vitamins and minerals from A to Z. There are a couple of things to watch out for: a) formulations that do not contain enough of a particular vitamin/mineral to make a difference and b) formulations that contain mega-doses of specific vitamins/minerals while excluding others. Providing details of recommended dosages is beyond the scope of this report but be sure to keep these two items in mind when looking for a Multivitamin/mineral blend.

Antioxidants
Antioxidants should be taken by most, if not all, people. Basically, anyone that is exercising on some level needs antioxidants. Why is this so? I'll give you some basic information to help you understand. I am sure that you already know the many benefits of exercising regularly but did you know that there can be problems with either too much exercise, not recovering between workouts or a combination of the two? Intense exercise causes a dramatic rise in 'free radicals' with a simultaneous reduction of antioxidant systems within the body to fight them. Left unhindered, free radicals will lead to breakdown of muscle tissue and produce several other problems. Some of these include:

damage to muscle fibers, fatigue, inflammation, and possibly immune system suppression.
What should you look for in a good antioxidant formula? Remembers this acronym – ACES
A – Vitamin A
C – Vitamin C
E – Vitamin E
S – Selenium
That is just for starters! Other ingredients you should watch out for include: Quercetin, lycopene, glutathione, co-enzyme Q10, alpha lipoic acid, grape seed extract to name a few.

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Vitamin C

Vitamin C supplementation has been around for decades. Dr. Linus Pauling is the man that is most responsible for showing us the benefits of higher dosages of Vitamin C supplementation. Some of these benefits include: increasing the testosterone/cortisol ratio, improving insulin sensitivity and decreasing exercise induced muscle damage. Also, those suffering from allergies can benefit by increasing their Vitamin C intake as Vitamin C is a known anti-histamine that has been shown to reduce allergic symptoms. There are many different schools regarding how much Vitamin C one should take.

One such school is Dr. Abram Hoffer. In his book **Laws of Natural Nutrition: A Guide to Eating Well for Pure Health –** Dr. Hoffer brings up two important concepts: a) biochemical individuality and b) the bowel tolerance factor (BTF). Biochemical individuality means that everyone is an individual and that no two individuals necessarily require the same amount of any nutrient. There are a number of factors to look at when deciding on how much of a particular nutrient to ingest; one of them is the Bowel Tolerance Factor. Essentially, it means that one should increase their Vitamin C dosages until they find that their bowels are loose and their movements more frequent. At this point, you would decrease your dosage until you are back to normal. For example, if taking 6,000 mg of Vitamin C is too high for you – dropping down to 5,500 mg may be the right amount. It's a matter of experimentation.

Protein Powder

Don't believe what some 'experts' say about everyone requiring the same amount of protein regardless of their physical activity levels. I believe that there are some that state that 80 grams per day is more than enough for the average individual. This is simply untrue. *There are a number of studies that have shown that increased physical activity requires an increase in dietary protein.* Also, some would have you believe that extra protein consumption can lead to increased kidney and liver problems but this has been refuted in recent years. If you do currently suffer from the above then I urge you to check with your physician **before** considering extra protein supplementation as it MAY lead to additional problems if left unchecked. For the most part, healthy individuals should not experience any problems with additional protein in their diet.

Generally speaking, when considering protein supplementation, I recommend a blend of different proteins instead of an individual protein i.e. whey protein. Different proteins digest at different rates. For example, whey protein is considered a fast-digesting protein while casein is a much slower one. By combining whey, casein and others in the same blend you get the benefits of both a slower and faster digestion rate. Also, proteins have different amino acids profiles. The more varied your protein sources – the more likely that you will get all the necessary nutrients needed to build the body of your dreams.

Another reason why I recommend protein supplementation is convenience. In our quest to build a better body it is not always possible to eat healthy – especially if you are on the road as often as I am. By having a protein powder with me I can mix it with water, add some efa's (such as fish oil – which will be covered below), perhaps a few carbs and I have an instant meal that will tide me over until I get home.

Essential Fatty Acids

What are **fats** doing on a list for supplementation? I want to lose fat – not gain it! Fats can be good or bad depending upon their use and the type of fat ingested. In his book "Fats That Heal, Fats That Kill" Udo Erasmus describes the various types of fats and their specific uses. There are different categories of fats which you may have already heard of:

Omega 3's

Omega 6's

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Omega 7's
Omega 9's

Without getting too complicated, there are certain ratios of fats that are needed by the body for optimal health. When the ratios are out of whack it can lead to a number of health problems: cardiovascular disease, cancer, etc.

The typical North American consumes too many Omega 6's and too few of the other fats which are essential to good health. We do need SOME Omega 6's but we have to ensure that we are taking in enough of the other ones for better health.

Here are just some of the benefits of increased Fish Oils:

- Increased serotonin levels (decreased depression)
- Helps prevent heart disease and cancer
- Reduced joint pain
- Lower incidence of inflammatory diseases such as asthma

The above benefits are listed at Coach Charles Poliquin's site. For more information visit http://www.charlespoliquin.net/articles/essential-fish-oils.html and pick up a copy of Udo's book "Fats That Heal, Fats That Kill.

A final note on EFA's – they have also been shown to reduce body fat levels! You may want to keep this in mind when you are trying to drop those last few pounds of unwanted fat!

Glutamine
Glutamine is one of the most important amino acids needed by the body. It comes in two forms: free form (L- Glutamine) and Glutamine Peptides. Glutamine also has many benefits:

Fuels the gut and immune system
Is a vital supply of fuel for muscles and the brain – it can replace carbohydrates as a fuel source
Aids in muscle glycogen resynthesis during recovery from exhaustive exercise
The above benefits of Glutamine use were discussed in Dr. Di Pasquale's article "Effects of Glutamine on Athletic Training"
http://www.metabolicdiet.com/articles/article.asp?article_id=126

Do you want to drop fat, increase your muscle mass and minimize the chances of over training? If you answered YES to any of the above questions I suggest that you consider Glutamine supplementation to help you with all of the above.

Zinc and Magnesium formulation
Did you know that a decrease in minerals can lead to a decrease in performance? Also depending on the study that you read, "54-75% of the *general* American population is deficient in magnesium. Variation for zinc is somewhat greater." Coach Charles Poliquin discussed this in a past issue of Question of Strength column at Testosterone. See the article for more information.
http://www.testosterone.net/html/body_97cp.html
Victor Conte of Balco Labs, the formulator of SNAC ZMA, has found the following re: Zinc and Magnesium http://www.snac.com/zma.html

"Zinc and magnesium are of vital importance to optimal performance:

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Zinc – A deficiency decreases **muscle strength and endurance.** Zinc is an anabolic element and promotes healing, tissue repair, and muscle growth. Zinc also increases the effect of Insulin-Like Growth Factor 1, Growth Hormone, and Testosterone. In addition, many of the enzymes that prevent the buildup of lactic acid (the "fatigue acids") require zinc.
Magnesium - A deficiency decreases **oxygen delivery** to muscle tissue. Magnesium promotes muscle strength, endurance, and relaxation. Magnesium also activates enzymes necessary for the metabolism of carbohydrates and amino acids."

On the topic of relaxation – one of the main areas that you should look at is your sleep. If you are not sleeping long enough and/or deep enough then your training and your health can suffer. Everyone has different sleep requirements and there are some individuals that can get by on as little as 4 hours of sleep per day. There is no perfect amount of time – it depends on the individual. The important thing is to determine the right amount of sleep for YOU. If you find that you are waking up tired and sluggish, it may be due to the fact that you are not getting quality sleep. I have found that my sleep patterns, and those of my clients, improved greatly when taking a zinc and magnesium formulation.

Final Thoughts
As good as any supplement is, many experts suggest rotating among several on a regular basis so that your body does not adapt to any one particular blend. I have my favourite with Dr. Mauro DiPasquale's Metabolic Diet (MD) line of supplements as Dr. D (as he is also known) does not put in fillers in his products. He does not believe in the kitchen sink approach – throw in everything that you possibly can to make it look like it is a better supplement. The more of the 'crap' that is added to a supplement as filler, the less of the quality ingredients that are in it. More is not always better!

For those of you that want to try out the MD line of supplements I have some great news for you! Body Sculpting V.I.P.'s and AtoZ Fitness readers receive a 20% discount on the entire MD line of supplements. All you have to do is use the code "gs101" when ordering their products and the order will automatically be adjusted to ensure you receive the proper savings.

*Disclaimer: The above statements are not intended to replace competent medical advice. When making any changes to your training, diet and supplementation program we advise you to check with your physician before doing so as everyone has their own unique needs and requirements.

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LIFESTYLE & WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

In this article, I will look at areas in your life that can be modified to help you with your health and fitness goals.

Time Management

One of the biggest excuses that I hear from clients is that they don't have enough time in the day to work out! I have difficulty believing this. We all have 24 hours in a day to accomplish what is important

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to us; the key is deciding on what is important to YOU! Before I go on, I would like you to write down, on paper, everything that is important to you. After doing this, I want you to prioritize this list from most to least important. If you did everything on the list separately, how long would it take you to accomplish them? Can you combine some of the activities? Can you free up some time during your day? If becoming healthier is not high on your list, then it is unlikely you are seriously ready to make healthy lifestyle changes.

Be Honest With Yourself

I want you to do an exercise for one day; carry a note-pad with you when you first wake up to when you go to bed at night. Write down everything that you do in the course of a typical day and I do mean EVERYTHING! Take an honest look at where you spend your time. A) Did you spend your lunch hour gossiping at work? B) Did you put your feet up when you got home from work and nap for a couple of hours? C) Did you spend time watching TV? What else did you do during the day that could have been better spent doing something more productive? Let's look at each example and see how we can improve it.

Possible Suggestions

A) Instead of spending your lunch hour (60 MIN?!) talking about shortcomings in others', you could have eaten your lunch and gone for a brisk walk.
B) Take a 15 - 30 min. nap if you need it instead of 2 hours. Studies have shown that a nap of not more than 30 minutes helps you feel refreshed and more alert. Sleeping longer than 30 minutes is not recommended as it can affect the quality of your night-time sleep. With the extra time that you are awake you could be doing more; such as working out.
C) If you need to watch TV, try to combine tasks. For example, throw a load of laundry in the wash, put some dinner in the oven, and jump on your exercise bike for 30 min. By following these suggestions, you would have completed many more things on your list. The time regained during the day would be at least 2 hours! Try doing this exercise not just for 1 day, but also for 1 week!

Keep an eye on what you do (or rather, what you don't do) on the weekends. Are your weekends as productive as they could be? Another suggestion is to write down what you plan on doing for the next day. As you complete your objectives, check them off. This will give you a sense of accomplishment.

Have a sense of urgency in your life. Nothing bothers me more than people shuffling their feet and going in slow motion. Pick up the pace! Think of how much you accomplish when you know that you only have a limited time to complete your tasks. It's surprising how quick and efficient you become when you put your mind to it.

Be Prepared

What else can you do to add more quality time in your life while staying healthy? Try preparing your meals ahead of time. Contrary to what many people think, it does not take much time to prepare fast and healthy food. You could spend some time every day cooking your food OR you could spend a 1/2-day on the weekend making enough food for the entire week! By doing all of the cooking at once, you free up major time in your life. An approach that I often use is cooking various meat, grain and vegetable dishes in advance. By taking this approach I can combine 1 type of meat with 1 type of grain or vegetable dish. This way I have a unique meal every day of the week. I suggest refrigerating some of the food and storing the rest in the freezer in microwaveable containers for later use. Also, date and label each food item for future reference.
I have a few other suggestions that you may find helpful

1) You can bring a Meal Replacement Powder in a Thermos pre-mixed with water or milk. Store this in your refrigerator at work until you are ready to drink it.
2) Prepare healthy foods that you enjoy eating! If you don't enjoy the taste of the foods that you are eating you will be tempted to replace it with fast foods.
3) Invest in home gym equipment. If you find that you are skipping workouts due to a busy schedule it is helpful if you have a mini-gym at home. An adjustable bench, a variety of dumbbells and a Swiss Ball will help you stay on track on the days you are unable to train at a gym.
4) Get rid of the junk food! It is so much easier to stay on track with your diet if you eliminate ALL junk food from your home.

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5) Use food substitution to help you get through the challenging times. Instead of eating chips, try pretzels. You do not have to give in entirely to your cravings – just choose food that is the lesser of the two evils.
6) Be organized with your supplement usage. Are you forgetting to take your vitamins and supplements throughout the day? If so, purchase a simple supplement carrying case to take with you during the day. Additionally, make a list of the supplements and when to take them. Check them off of the list as you have them.

The Juggler

An analogy that I use with some of my clients regarding time management is the Juggler at the circus. He/she has a certain number of items up in the air that need attention. Many people spend too much time on trivial tasks and very little time on important tasks.

The Juggler gets around this by spending more time on the high priority items and less time on the lower priority ones. High priority items for the Juggler are handled more often while lower ones are up in the air more often. Ultimately, it is up to you to decide on what is important to you and what you want to focus upon!

Plan Of Action

After determining what is important to you, it is essential that you have a plan of action. I prefer to use Stephen covey's approach from his book "First Things First". Schedule time for all the important things first. Make sure that you accomplish your objectives before going on to the items lower on your list.

How To Schedule

Don't have too tight a schedule where you are rushed for time or don't have room for emergencies that may come up. Instead, schedule blocks of time to accomplish your daily activities while leaving room for crises that may arise. Also, do your agenda ahead of time; not on the day that you're going to follow it. By planning it ahead of time, you are being proactive rather than reactive. I used to do my schedule the day that I needed it but often got diverted by insignificant items that hindered bigger goals.

Keep in mind that the cumulative effect of a lot of SMALL changes in your lifestyle can lead to BIG changes in your health and fitness.

This weekly article from George is an excerpt from his upcoming book "How YOU Can Sculpt A Leaner, Healthier Body In 12 Weeks!" that will be available soon

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WATER

Water, Water Everywhere

What is the most abundant substance in your body that makes up 70-75% of your total body weight? The answer is WATER. Water is involved in every bodily function known to us. That is why it is important to consume large quantities of this essential and beneficial liquid on a daily basis. You can go a few days without food but can not survive longer than one day without water.

Is Eight Glasses Enough?

Now that you know the importance of drinking water the question is "How much water should one drink?" The standard answer of (six - eight) 8 oz glasses per day just doesn't cut it. I'll explain why in a moment. Consider the fact that people come in various shapes and sizes. Does it make sense to you for a 5'0" tall girl weighing 100 lbs. to drink the same amount of water as a 6'6" professional athlete weighing over 230 lbs.? It doesn't make sense to me!

How Much Do I Need?

From my experience, a general guideline on water consumption is to take your weight in pounds and multiply it by 0.5 - 0.6 oz/lb. For example, if you weigh 200 lbs. you should be drinking 120 oz of water per day (200 X 0.6). This works out to (12 - 15) 8 oz glasses per day. At first glance it may seem like a lot of water but you are not drinking it all at once. If you sleep an average of 8 hours per night, you are awake for 16 hours. By drinking 1 glass every hour, you will meet your quota of water for the day.

An approach that you may consider using is carrying your water in a 4-L jug. Determine approximately how much water you need and mark it off on the side of the container. Then fill up what you require to last you throughout the day. If you finish all the water in the jug by the end of the day, then you have met your water quota. This is a much easier method to gauge your water intake.

Watch Out For Dehydration!

A note about dehydration. If you feel thirsty at any point, chances are that you are dehydrated. This is your body's way of telling you to consume more water. When you figure out your water consumption for the day, remember that it is water alone; not overall fluid intake for the day. By this I mean drinking the equivalent amount in soft drinks and caffeinated beverages does not equal your daily water intake. Certainly soft drinks contain some water but there are so many chemicals added to them that they do you more harm than good.

Distilled Water, Spring Water, Tap Water - What To Drink?

A question that I am often asked by my clients is, "What kind of water should they drink? Tap water, spring, distilled or filtered water?" I don't claim to be an expert in the field but I prefer to drink tap water that has been filtered in some way or Spring Water.

I used to drink Distilled Water but no longer do so. I found that even though I would drink 5-6 L of Distilled Water on a daily basis I was often dehydrated and extremely tired! For the longest time I did not understand why this was but speaking to experts in the Personal Training industry cleared this up for me. When water is Distilled (usually Steam Distilled) many of the minerals that are usually found in the water are no longer there. All we are left with is plain H20. Through the process of Osmosis - (the process whereby minerals or any other substance within a cell will move from a high concentration to a lower concentration to ensure that all cells contain the same percentage of the substance), we are taking minerals from a high concentration within the body to a lower concentration within the water we are drinking. To sum it up, Distilled Water leeches minerals from the body and I prefer to avoid it when possible.

Active People Need More

I have given you the general guidelines on water consumption for the average person. I will now touch on water intake for the active individual. There are many experts that believe active people should consume more water than sedentary people should. I couldn't agree further. Take this fact into consideration; muscle is composed primarily of what? You got it - WATER! The more active you are, generally speaking the more muscle mass you will be carrying. Therefore, you should drink more water to fuel the extra muscle mass and to keep yourself hydrated.

With regards to how much water you should drink, some experts recommend the following: 20-30 minutes before exercise drink 8-10 oz of water; every 10-15 minutes drink at least 3-6 oz; and have another 8-10 oz within 30 minutes following the exercise session. Remember that this is relative to your body weight and lean body mass. When in doubt, consume more water.

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How Do I Know If I Am Drinking Enough?

A simple test to use to see if you are drinking enough water is to pay attention to the color of your urine. If it is yellow in color or cloudy - you know that you are not drinking enough. If it is clear, more often than not, you are hydrated.

*Note: the formula I have given above is a general guideline to follow. Research has show that one can even *overhydrate* by drinking too much water. This happens reasonably often in endurance events, where competitors sometime take this regular drinking advice too literally and end up collapsing because they drank TOO MUCH water, which constitutes a stress on the body (for example, changes in brain chemistry, lung congestion and muscle weakness). This condition is known as water intoxication or hyponatremia. (I would like to thank John Paul Catanzaro of Body Essence for bringing this condition to my attention). Basically, the recommendation is to drink water as you lose it!

Top

George Stavrou, B.A. Psyc., is a certified personal trainer and lifestyle & weight management consultant. George is the author of the #1 best-selling Ebook on Amazon.com "How YOU Can Sculpt A Leaner, Healthier Body In 12 Weeks: A Guide For Beginners!" (December 2002). The Revised version is due out in Summer 2004 and has contributions from the following experts: John Paul Catanzaro – exercise program, Dr. Eric Serrano – nutrition, Dr. Mauro DiPasquale – supplementation. He is also the owner of Body Sculpting Corp., a company based in Toronto, Ontario that specializes in one-stop shopping for your health and fitness needs. George's Philosophy can be summed up in his Company Slogan "A Healthy Way To A Better Body And Mind!" For more information visit www.bodysculpting.ca or call 416-267-0856.

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Top Saving Time With The Obvious

In the usual spirit of unbridled simplicity I use to solve fitness conundrums, let me lay out a key component of my Busy-&-Fit strategy, and then show you how to apply it.

Spend Less Time in the Gym

Yeah, I know, everybody says that. But here's the deal: You're not trying to be the next Mr. America, right? Heck no. You just want to stay healthy, look healthy, and enjoy life with a body capable of taking you where you want to go--this fact allows you to save a lot of time that an elite athlete can't. BUT, and this is key, there's no such thing as a free lunch...and speaking of lunch--food in particular--if you want to spend less time in the gym, then you're going to have to eat less food when you're away from it.

By "less" I mean calories, but especially sugars and saturated fats, processed foods (like enriched wheat flour), and alcohol.

This isn't earth shattering stuff I realize. But here's the kicker: The most efficient means to improve your health and physique is through proper diet. Implication: Instead of obsessing over the weight room and spending two hours of valuable family time doing more harm than good, spend 45 minutes training efficiently, then, EAT RIGHT, and presto! 4 times the benefit.

The principle of focusing on your diet more so than your training is another example of the 80 / 20 rule which states (for those 3 people who've been living in Afghanistan for the past 20 years): you get 80% of your results from 20% of your efforts, and 20% of your results from 80% of your efforts.

Now, don't get me wrong, you MUST train; 20% of your results is still a big chunk, and ironically, in one of life's little cruel jokes, you won't even get the full 80% from diet unless you combine it with exercise. (Instead you'll get %100 of your results from diet--but those results won't be worth taking to the beach.)

The trick is to again, train the most efficient way possible, and that's where a lot of the Art of staying in shape is brought to bear. It's tough enough just to get one good workout; it's even tougher to string them together for months and years, varying them so that you avoid plateaus, and then staying motivated enough to keep at it into old age. But, that's what we must do.

Like work--it's what you make of it. And really the only thing that makes it easier is doing less of it, and as I've said, diet is the surest way to cut back on gym time.

Top Back at the Gym After a Layoff

This is a pertinent article for a lot of reasons. The first is that no matter how much you warn people to take it slow when they get into fitness, they inevitably go full blast and gung ho right into a routine designed for an experienced athlete.

Given the time of year, there's also a lot of you who are about to "get back in shape," as part of your get-back-in-shape-for-summer plans. I'm here to tell you that if you start out with the same intensity and

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volume that you stopped working out at, it won't be pretty. The body is much more adept at atrophying into ball of soft, formless flab than it is at building muscle, so even if you're time away from the gym has been short, don't expect to come back anywhere close to full strength. Instead, listen to some of my advice listed here:

1) Whatever you think you can do in terms of intensity (the percentage of your 1-rep-max, or load), do about 3/4's of that for a given rep range.

I'm not saying that you couldn't do more just that, if you do, you're going to hurt very, very bad the next few days--so bad, that it might actually make you sick. One of the most important adaptations your body makes in response to weight training is in it's ability to recover from physical stress, and it's ability to cope with the waste products that intense training produces. It's also one of the "systems" that decline first with an extended layoff. Your muscle strength, though dropping off considerably, doesn't decline to the point of your recovery systems when you cease a training regimen. What this means is that during the initial days (or weeks) of a comeback, you're able to do more damage to yourself than your body can cope with, and you can actually make yourself sick.

2) Similarly, for a given body part, do 1/2 to 3/4's the number of sets you think you should do.

This might be even more important than my first tip, because training with a high number sets (increased volume) produces more waste products (typically) than lower volume, higher intensity training does. The reasoning behind this advice is basically the same as above.

3) Though you're likely to integrate a more healthy diet into your new shape-up regimen, ease into it with respect to calorie restriction and food type restriction.

Your body is a fine-tuned machine, but there are two caveats to this: a) it's a machine fine-tuned to whatever fuel you've been giving it recently, and b) it doesn't like to change. So the last thing you want to do is make it adjust, overnight, to a completely different chemistry. To do so is like trying to run your lawnmower with diesel fuel instead of unleaded. Instead, you need to slowly modify your eating habits from the sugar coated, chocolate-dipped sausage links and deep-fried cheese nuggets you've been living off of in between those 12 ounce curls, and gradually replace a artery choking meal or two with a high protein, low fat alternative--or gasp!--some fibrous green vegetables.

The body actually adjusts itself to what your diet by producing a different array of enzymes to match what you eat. If you gradually adjust your diet, it can keep up with the changes. The idea is to trick your body into thinking that nothing's out of the ordinary by making consistent, almost imperceptible changes. If you shock it, it fights back.

Eventually of course, you'll want to get on with your "normal" amount of intensity and volume, as well as healthy eating habits. How long the transition should take is largely going to be personal and will depend on how long it's been since you were last in shape. Here are some general guidelines to keep in mind:

It's better train (and eat) at a level that you can maintain over a long period of time. Consistency beats out growth in spurts every time.

Leave yourself somewhere to go. By this I mean, don't start out eating so few calories in the beginning of your diet, or training so intensely at the start of your new routine, that you have nothing new to try when you hit your first plateaus.

When you're disappointed at the lack of soreness a workout produces, it's probably time to bump of the intensity and / or volume (depending on what kind of training phase your on).

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A Workout Protocol For When You Only Have A LITTLE Time: 10 Steps for a 10-minute-or-less muscle blast!

There are times when you get to the gym at the end of a long day at the office (or in the morning before work if you prefer), and suddenly remember that you have an appointment coming up that you almost completely forgot about, leaving you with what seems like too little time for a workout. Most of the time when this happens, people just bail. They head back to the locker room like a whipped puppy, slightly frustrated and defeated looking, and mumbling promises under their breath as to when they're going to make up the missed training time (yeah, right). But sure enough, the workout never happens (and you'd be surprised how often that workout happens to fall on a leg day--LOL). Believe me, you'll feel better

about yourself if you can just find a way to do SOMETHING for the muscle group you wanted to train. And wouldn't it be nice if that something actually benefited you, instead of making you feel like it was a waste of time? I think I have a solution…

Let's say you only have 10 minutes (or even less) to work with. Here's a routine that can be applied to any body part you've scheduled to train that I guarantee will get you in and out of the gym quickly, with enough stimulation to at least maintain your present levels of mass, or even shock you into some new growth. Just follow these steps:

STEPS:

1) Choose what I like to call a "core" exercise for the muscle group you'd like to train. Examples include compound movements like Bench Press or Dips for chest, Pull-ups or Rows for lats, Squats or Leg Presses for quads, or Dumbbell Curls for the biceps, etc..

2) Select a load for the exercise at about half the weight you plan to use for your first work set (your work set will consist of 8 or more reps, but the exact number doesn't matter—just keep it less than 15), and do a warm up of 8-10 reps. This should not fatigue you, only prepare your muscles for the full range of motion required for the movement.

3) Don't rest at all after this first warm up, instead, immediately perform appropriate stretches after this first warm up set, holding each in the fully stretched position for about 20-30 seconds. Don't try to overdo it here, just get loose and feel the increased blood supply to the muscle limber you up. By the way, by stretching right after performing an exercise, you greatly increase the effectiveness of the stretch. You should also stretch in between work sets to increase your overall flexibility, as when you are fatigued, you can stretch much deeper without pain.

4) After your first stretch, select a load approximately half way between your first warm up set and the load you plan to use during your first work set. (Again, the exact number of reps you perform for your first work set isn't going to matter, just shoot for 8-15 reps.) Now perform 5 reps with this load, and then stretch immediately afterward as described in step 3). This time take your stretches a little further with regard to the range of motion… Now it's time for the FUN!

5) For the exercise you've chosen, start with the weight you picked for your first work set (something that allows between 8 and 15 reps). Do as many reps as possible while still maintaining PERFECT form. If you're sufficiently experienced, I call this point "1-rep before failure." Otherwise it's the point where you can't maintain PERFECT form for a given movement for just 1 more rep. Each rep should have a lowering phase (negative) that takes 3 seconds to complete, a pause at the bottom (or midpoint) of 1 full second, a positive (or raising phase) of 1 second, and a contraction (pause in the fully contracted position of the movement) of about 1 full second. When you can't maintain this rather strict tempo, then that means your form isn't PERFECT anymore and you should stop. In other words, if you have to go "faster" to get another rep, or if it takes you longer than a second to raise the weight, you're done.

6) Now, after completing this first set, immediately strip half the weight and perform another set. You should start this next set within 10 seconds of completing the first. Stop 1 rep short of failure, or when your form deviates from PERFECT, as described above.

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7) Rest exactly 10 seconds and try to perform 3 more reps. This is known as a "rest-pause."

8) Rest 10 more seconds. As you're resting, look around the gym for the first free exercise that compliments the one you just did for the same body part. For example, if you just did the Bench Press for chest, then scan the gym until you find a free incline bench or dip stand. Go to the next exercise station at the end of your 10 second rest and select a load you *think* will let you get about 12 reps. Now, try and perform those 12 reps with the tempo prescribed in step 5). Don't be surprised if you can't get all 12 reps before deviating from PERFECT form.

9) Now rest only 5 seconds and immediately do a bodyweight-only exercise for this now very pumped, very fatigued muscle group. Examples include Pushups for chest, Squats with no bar for quads, Narrow Stance Pushups for triceps, and the like. If you can't find / think of a body weight only exercise for a given body part your training, then just load up a machine with a weight you think will allow about 50 reps for that same body part. Now get to it! Perform as many reps as you possibly can before the pain is too intense to continue, or you reach complete and total failure (which should be perfectly safe given that you're only using your body weight at this point). For this final set, you should perform the reps quickly, with no pauses in the middle or the end of each rep. Just find a good rhythm and knock 'em out!

10) Take a look at the clock. I suspect the previous Giant-Drop-Rest Pause-Set combo took no more than 5 minutes. If you have time, do two more of these in the method prescribed. 3 full rotations of this masochistic routine would constitute a full workout for anybody (I did something similar for chest three days ago and I'm still sore), but rest assured, even if you only have time for 1 round, you'll still have performed a workout that will at least maintain your hard earned muscle mass for another week.

So the next time you don't have the time , think again! Try this routine. And do let me know how it went!

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Sleep Enough

In Stephen Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* , he talks about the P/PC Balance, shorthand for the *Production vs. Production Capability* balance we all must have to succeed in fitness and other areas of our lives.

To illustrate his point he tells the fable of the goose that laid golden eggs. In the fable, a farmer has a goose that suddenly begins laying golden eggs--a resource with obvious benefit to the farmer. But like so many of us, the farmer got greedy. One golden egg a day wasn't good enough. The farmer asked himself: *what if I cut open the goose and get all the eggs at once?* You know the rest: the farmer killed the goose,

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AND lost his source of golden eggs for good.
So what does this have to do with sleep?

Simple: you might liken your ability to produce muscle and burn fat to the goose's ability to lay golden eggs--get greedy, expect too much all at once, or over train--and you won't be able to produce any more muscle or burn any more fat.

Think of it this way: Muscle building and fat-burning represent *production* . Taking care of yourself by getting enough sleep (as well as eating right, and keeping a positive attitude) represents *production capability* . It takes both!
So how much sleep should you get? Well, this is largely an individual thing, but here are some observations:
1) Doctors recommend at least 8 hours per night for the average individual.
2) Athletes at the top of their game often sleep 10 hours per night.
3) Some people claim that they get by on much less just fine--as low as 5 hours per night.
4) Often, elves to get by on less sleep.
5) Just because you can get by on less sleep doesn't mean it's the best thing for you.
6) Finally, sleep is absolutely NECESSARY for muscles to repair from a workout. If you don't get enough sleep, you won't make gains.

It's a simple tip, but getting enough sleep will keep you on the path of fitness.

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THE MEANING OF "LIFTING HARD"

We all know that to make gains we need to "lift hard." But what exactly does that mean? In the magazines, there's all this talk of increasing intensity, and then there's the conventional wisdom of "going to failure." But if you ask ten top bodybuilders what intensity means, or just the definition of "lifting hard," you'll likely get ten different responses. Well, it's time to set aside the confusion.

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The real meaning of intensity

Intensity is simply the load on the bar, measured as a percentage of your 1-rep-max (1RM) for a given exercise. For instance, if you can bench press 200 pounds for 1 rep, and you're currently performing a set of 10 reps with 140 pounds, then your intensity for that set is 70%.

This meaning of intensity keeps things simple. It quantifies what we mean when we talk about intensity. In contrast, many gym goers confuse intensity with subjective terminology like "the burn," or "the pump," or even a particularly "hard" style of lifting like Supersets or Drop Sets. What they're really referring to is *effort.*

Intensity vs. Effort

I've already said that intensity is simply the percentage of your 1RM that a particular exercise is performed at. This makes sense because at 100% percent intensity, you're handling all the weight you possibly can. However, anyone who's ever tried a 10 sets of 10 approach knows that it doesn't take high intensity loading to produce *intense* fatigue and delayed onset muscle soreness! That's something you need to understand: **Intensity and Effort are not the same thing.** In order to overload your muscles (and remember from last week that overloading is key), you should be expending maximum effort during your workouts--maximum effort **no matter what intensity you're working at.**

What I mean is this: if you perform a 1RM and then leave the gym, you didn't exert maximum effort. You could have performed many more sets before fatigue set in. This means that it's possible to lift at maximum intensity, and still exert very little effort. Conversely, you can go all out in the effort department without using very high intensity loads.

So which is it? Do we want high effort, or do we want high intensity? The simple answer is BOTH. But I think I should explain why, as well as how each contributes to gaining muscle.

Relationships in Loading

In general, it takes high intensity loads to stimulate muscle growth (>65% 1RM). This is because muscles are made up of different fiber types. I won't go into the details here, but basically, the fiber types that have greatest growth potential only get activated during high intensity loading. For low loads, the nervous system only activates enough fibers to move the weight and that's it. And the first fibers to activate are always the slow-twitch, endurance type fibers that have very little growth potential. But if you load a muscle sufficiently with a high enough percentage of your 1RM, it has no choice but to fire the big, strong, easy to hypertrophy fibers.

So why not just perform 1RM's all the time and call it a day? Because it takes *effort* to induce gains, too.

How to Measure Effort if it's Subjective

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Effort is subjective in some ways. But it's essential for growth. So how do we know we're exerting enough effort during our workouts? Well, one way to think about it is in terms of fatigue. In the lab, fatigue can actually be measured by taking blood samples immediately after strenuous exercise, but that's a little inconvenient for our purposes. For me, fatigue can be expressed in terms of how difficult it is to breathe following a set, how much of a "burn" I feel in the target muscle, and how much my strength drops off during the next set of a particular exercise. All of these are measures of fatigue. In truth, relying on only these measures is a HUGE simplification of the entire fatigue picture, because first of all, fatigue can occur in multiple systems of the body simultaneously, and secondly, it will vary with regard to its effect on these systems depending on the training protocol. It's just not a simple thing to measure!

But we want simple! What I propose is that we sort of average all these "symptoms" of fatigue together, so that with experience in the weight room we can learn to rate our levels of fatigue for a given training protocol against past efforts.

Our best effort is always a "10" and our worst is a "0."

You'll actually find that different styles of training produce different types of fatigue. For example, high volume training tends to produce a "burning" fatigue and difficulty breathing at the end of a set, while high intensity training produces a dull aching pain in the muscle being trained and a feeling of energy depletion in the target muscle.

I've really simplified the effort-fatigue relationship, but it's a very in depth subject, beyond the scope of this newsletter. The important thing to remember is that you must always push yourself harder in the gym than you have in the past (neglecting planned recovery periods of course).

Science is still explaining the mechanisms by which effort and the resulting fatigue of such effort influence muscle growth. but it's clear it takes both effort AND high intensity loading to induce maximum gains.

So Why Perform Sets of 6-12 Reps?

Answering this question really clarifies the relationship between intensity and effort, and hopefully clears up any confusion concerning this topic. Remember, it takes a load of at least 65% to really engage any of the high growth potential fibers in a muscle. It just so happens that a 12 rep set taken to failure requires about a 65% load on the bar (on average--people vary). Progressively higher intensities yield lower rep ranges, but more engagement of the fast-twitch fibers that grow so big. However, lower reps mean lower effort, which if you haven't figured out by now, is almost directly proportional to the time spent under tension (under load). Less reps, less time under tension.

Solution: do more sets. It's the **total** time under tension for a target muscle group that counts during a workout. And each level of intensity has a threshold that must be met in order to sufficiently

fatigue the muscle fibers targeted by that intensity level, and to induce growth.

Cycling

If you think about it, it becomes apparent that our thousands of ways to lift with adequate intensity and effort at each and every workout. But not all of these ways are optimal, nor should we do the same thing forever. That's where cycling comes in, but that's a discussion for another day. Intensity vs. effort is enough to chew on for now. The Busyandfit.com Advanced Training and Nutrition Guide provides much more information on this fascinating topic, and gives you the specifics on how to apply it to your own workouts and routines.

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KEEPING WEIGHT LOSS SIMPLE

If you look at the weight loss industry, or any popular diet, it's anything but simple. There are conflicting opinions, fads, doctors that recommend one thing and gurus that recommend another. I'm here to tell you, however, losing weight and staying fit with a healthy diet is NOT that complicated. Notice I didn't say "easy" (it's anything but), rather I said that healthy eating was easy to *understand* .
Here's all you really need to know:

1. If you burn more calories in a day than you consume, overtime you will lose weight.

2. If you consume more calories than you burn, overtime you will gain weight.

3. And if you consume exactly the same number of calories as you burn, you guessed it, you'll maintain your current weight.

Yes it is that simple. Simple, but obviously, given the fact so many people are overweight, NOT so easy.

This article isn't about making dieting "easier." I mean only to inform you that making it any more complicated than what I've stated above isn't going to make it any easier. So why are so many weight loss systems complicated? The biggest reasons are gimmicks and marketing. The weight loss industry's kind of like the shoe industry in that respect. You can't tell me that this year's Nikes are any better than Nikes from a year ago--yet you can bet Nike will tell you just that. They'll change designs every few months. People like novelty, but I'm not convinced that's part of our "nature" rather than the result of growing up in front of the TV. Surly if we think about it rationally, we can see that "old" technology isn't completely worthless just because something new comes out. One reason people by into the gimmicks of fad diets is because they're more apt to believe in something they don't fully understand. What I've stated above about losing weight is all you really need to know (though there are certainly tips and tricks that can make the process smoother), but since even a first-grader can make sense of it, most people assume its too "easy" to work, as if success had to be complicated. More to the point, if someone who needs to lose weight doesn't understand how their diet works, that gives them a good excuse when they fail. As long as you burn more calories than you consume, ALL DIETS WORK. All of them. Of course, there are some more healthy than others, handsome easier to stick to, but they'll all work.

Burning

As spelled out above. There are two parts to a diet: the burning and the consuming. Let's start with the burning. The most effective and efficient way to burn calories is through weight training. Now before you cardio nuts try and crucify me, hear me out. I define "efficiency" as doing the most work in the least amount of time. A high intensity exercise, such as lifting weights, burns MANY more calories per hour than does lower intensity aerobic work. But that's not even the best reason to lift weights in favor of marathon cardio sessions. Lifting weights builds muscle, and the more muscle you have, the more calories you burn in ALL other activities. Not only that, but muscle burns a heck of a lot of calories just trying to maintain itself. This means that as you sleep, if you have extra muscle you're burning extra calories! If you have the time, plan undoing some cardio work too, as there are some great health benefits, but if you're time limited (and who isn't these days?) focus most of your efforts on the weight room. Of course, if you don't eat much, you won't have to burn much. But remember: it's tough to get all the vitamins and other nutrients you need when you're on a diet, so you should make it your goal to eat as much as possible while still losing weight, and to do that, you need to exercise. Besides, if you don't eat enough, your body will sabotage your weight loss efforts by simply lowering its metabolism too compensate for the decreased calorie intake.

Consuming

I've already said that you should try to eat as much as possible during diet while still losing the desired amount of weight. They types of food you eat will determine how well you're able to do this, and also how healthy your diet is. I like to think of food being either fuel or building blocks. Carbohydrates and fats are the fuel. Proteins the building blocks. When you're trying to lose weight, you only want enough fuel to power your brain and to get you through your workouts with a slight deficit. Fat is an energy dense food, containing more than twice the amount of calories per gram as do carbohydrates. So if you're trying to eats much food as possible in terms of nutrients, it makes sense to avoid most, but not all fat, and instead eat complex carbohydrates(especially the fibrous variety like vegetables) for your fuel source. Since we want to build muscle, we're going to need something to build it with. That's protein's job. Consuming enough protein is probably the single biggest challenge in a proper diet of any kind, whether it be for losing weight or gaining it. You should be consuming about 1 gram of protein per pound of body weight, even more if the sources of protein are less than optimal. With out getting into the

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details, it's best to eat the highest quality protein you can get your hands on. Supplements some in handy here, but chicken breast, tuna, and egg whites are some other good options. Conclusion I've really just scratched the surface here with regards to dieting, and since I realize this, you can expect many more articles in the future to flesh out the topic of dieting to lose weight, and to suggest where you might go from here. But I promise you, everything else that can be said about dieting is really only an expansion on the basic facts you've just read.

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"The first Wealth is Health."

Jeremy Markum has been helping others get in shape for over 5 years, all the while keeping himself in top condition for his regular appearances in fitness magazines and other fitness-related media. He's currently running www.busyandfit.com while finishing up a Masters degree in Information Science and Technology. When he's not working on the site, developing new time-saving techniques in the gym, or consulting with clients, Jeremy enjoys writing fiction, riding motorcycles, and main-lining caffeine (just kidding). If anyone knows how to keep fit and live a balanced life, despite having a BUSY schedule, it's Jeremy!

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Top 4 Secrets To A Flat Stomach

By Jesse Cannone CFT, SPN, CPRS

Do you want a flat stomach? I don't know a person who doesn't!
People spend millions, if not billions of dollars, each year in the quest for a flat stomach. Right now there are about 200 or more ab exercise devices out there. There's the ab do-it, the ab rock-it, the ab roller, the ab dolly, and so many more. You would think that with all of these amazing new products that most people would be walking around with that nice, lean mid-section they've always wanted. Unfortunately, that's not the case.

Most, if not all of these products, will do little or nothing to flatten your stomach. And that's because these exercise contraptions cannot eliminate the layer of fat that lies on top of your abs.
In order to be successful at thinning your waistline you must have a basic under standing of how the ab muscles function and how your body burns fat. The first thing that needs to be understood is the difference between fat and muscle. Fat is excess calories and is primarily stored in layers on top of muscle tissue. Muscle is made up of fibers that contract or shorten to produce movement. Fat cannot turn into muscle and muscle cannot turn into fat! However, you can lose muscle and you can gain fat. That's what happens to most people.

So if your goal is to thin your waist line and have a nice flat stomach, the first thing you need to do is decrease / eliminate the layers of fat that are on top of your abs. We all have a flat stomach; it's just some of oar’s are covered by excess fat.

The most effective way of flattening your stomach is a combination of strength training (with a extra focus on mid-section), cardiovascular exercise (short, hard workouts), and stable blood sugar (keeps you from adding additional fat and makes it easier for the body to use body fat for fuel).

1. You must do some form of progressive strength training
The primary function of the ab muscle is to flex your torso forward. However, there are also muscles that flex your torso to the side and muscles that rotate your torso. Often times you see people on their ab roller every day doing hundreds of crunches or sit-ups.

If you want to effectively strengthen your stomach you need to incorporate the following types of exercises:
• 1-2 forward flexion exercises (crunch, sit-up, etc.)
• 1-2 side flexion exercises (side bends, side crunches, etc.)
• 1-2 rotational exercises (trunk rotations, standing twists, etc.)

The abs, are muscles just like any other and should be worked at most 3 times per week. You also want to make sure you are training them progressively, working them harder each time.

2. Use short, hard cardio workouts to increase metabolism
Cardio workouts are important because they CAN, if done correctly, increase your metabolism for 4-24 hours or more! This means you are less likely to store any excess calories as body fat because they are more likely to be used by your elevated metabolism. Plus, you are more likely to burn off some excess body fat.

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Below is a sample interval workout that can be done with just about any activity (walking, bicycling, swimming, stair climbing, etc.).

Warm up at easy pace 2-5 minutes
ŕ Perform 30 seconds of hard work (almost as hard as possible)
ŕ perform 1 minute of moderate work (recovery time -catch breath)
ŕ Repeat this process 6 -10 times
ŕ C ool down at an easy pace for 2-5 minutes

3. Stable blood sugar is the key
And most importantly, you must stabilize your blood sugar! This is by far the most important factor when it comes to burning away that excess body fat and keeping it off! To effectively stabilize your blood sugar you must feed your body frequently; like every 2-3 hours. The key is to give your body only what it needs at that time. Your body burns calories 24 hours a day, so, why would you only feed it once or twice a day? Give your body the fuel it needs: vegetables, fruits, nuts, berries, whole grains, and lean proteins (chicken, fish, lean beef, eggs, etc.).

Many people are too hung up on how much fat is in food, or how healthy of a choice it is. Calories are calories and it doesn't matter where they come from. If there's extra… where's it going? Yup, you guessed it… body fat!

This is not to say that what you eat is not important because it is, it just doesn't have that much of an affect when it comes to fat loss. Try to make healthy choices whenever possible, but don't feel like if you eat a cheeseburger it is guaranteed to be stored as fat

4. Get the help of a professional
Unfortunately, most people don't know enough about the human body, nutrition, or effective exercise to meet their health and fitness goals. Ask yourself this one question, "Am I happy with my current progress or condition?" If you're not, you should consider getting the help of a qualified personal fitness professional. Don't depend on the information you get from magazines or from your local gym/ health club. A qualified fitness professional can help you achieve your health and fitness goals, and in less time than you would imagine.
If you are serious about your health and fitness goals, and you are ready for that flat stomach, I recommend you start implementing the 4 strategies listed in this article. These 4 strategies can help you take control of your metabolism and burn off that excess body fat and having you looking and feeling great! If you would like to receive more information on how to lose those love handles please call me at 240-731-3724 or e-mail jcfit@msn.com.

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The Functional Training Craze

By Jesse Cannone CPRS, CFT, SPN, APFT

In the past few years I've seen a huge transition in the fitness industry. More and more people are using functional training, and some argue it's the only way to train. The purpose of this article is to give people an understanding of what functional training is, and what it does and does not do.

First, lets look at what functional actually means.

Functional 1. *capable of operating or functioning, 2. capable of serving the purpose for which it was intended (Webster.s Encyclopedia 2nd Edition, 1996*)

Based on that definition, you can draw many conclusions as to what is functional. Depending upon who you ask, you will most likely get a diverse variety of responses as to what is functional. All human movement is a combination of various functions. Human movement cannot take place without muscular function. According to the functional training .experts., functional training uses bands, balls, free-weights, and plyometric exercises in an attempt to condition the body in an un-stable environment. Many of the experts feel that performing exercises that mimic activities or specific skills is the most effective way to train, regardless of ones goal.

What is the safest, most efficient and effective way to optimize human performance?

Factors Affecting Human Performance

In order to maximize human performance, you must have a good understanding of what affects performance. The factors that play the greatest role in performance are: Power (Strength and Speed), Agility (Flexibility/Mobility/Stability), Cardiovascular and Respiratory Conditioning, Sport Skill (Neuromuscular Coordination and Efficiency), and Genetic Potential.

Let's take a look at each factor and determine which training methods are going to deliver optimal results. By optimal results, I mean the greatest amount of improvement, with the least amount of risk, and in the shortest amount of time.

Power

$$\text{Power} = \frac{\text{Force} \times \text{Distance}}{\text{Time}}$$

Power can be increased three ways.

1. Increase Force (Strength)

What is the most effective method of increasing strength and/or muscle tissue? In my opinion, High Intensity Strength Training is the most productive, safe, and time efficient approach available. I am not stating that one set of each exercise is the best choice. My definition of High Intensity Training is: training to momentary muscular failure, with brief and infrequent workouts in which all variables are prescribed based on the individuals: goals, age, current fitness level, fiber types, personal preference, and past experience.

The purpose of strength training is to increase strength and lean body mass, NOT for training a specific skill or movement .that's called practice! People strength train for many reasons and there are many methods that work. For years, many trainers and coaches have had their clients and athletes perform Olympic lifts because they feel it will transfer over into the performance of their skill. Numerous studies have shown that the neurological transfer of skills is not optimal unless the skill is practiced EXACTLY as it is performed in competition. Therefore, performing power cleans because you play football is NOT optimal. Performing power-cleans will only get you better at performing power-cleans! Focus on increasing strength and lean body mass, and practice your skill exactly as it is performed during competition.

2. Increase Speed

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Increasing the speed at which a skill is performed is another great way to improve power. Speed is primarily predetermined by the individual's genetic make up. However, that does not mean that you cannot improve speed by practicing the skill EXACTLY as it is performed in competition. A great deal of focus should be placed on perfecting the technique. By practicing the skill in this manner, you will improve neuromuscular efficiency, which will result in faster and more accurate performance.

3. Increase Distance (flexibility/range of motion)

Increasing flexibility is another way to improve power. By increasing flexibility, you increase the distance that force is applied which results in an increase in power.
The safest and most effective method to increase flexibility is by performing full range of motion exercises and incorporating a sound stretching routine.

Agility

Improving ones agility is another way of optimizing performance. Agility drills should be SPECIFIC to the activity or event. For example, having someone do Plyometric jumps off of boxes is NOT specific to someone who plays basketball! Yes, a basketball player jumps, but not off of boxes. Having the athlete practice jumping from the floor would be much more specific to their sport. Always ask yourself, .What is the goal?. .Is what I.m doing going to give me the outcome I desire?. .Is it optimal?.

Cardiovascular and Respiratory Conditioning

Increasing cardio/respiratory output and endurance is another factor that has a major impact on performance. This topic is one of such importance that it is beyond the scope of this article. In general, if you increase the individual.s cardiovascular and respiratory output and endurance, there will be a corresponding increase in performance. Cardiovascular training should also be specifically geared towards improving the individuals conditioning in the metabolic pathway in which they compete or perform. For example, someone who plays tennis should primarily train at a slow to moderate pace and incorporate bursts of high intensity effort. Interval training would be a good choice for this individual. Keep the training specific to the individual.

Sport Skill

This is an area in which there is a lot of confusion among many athletes, coaches, and trainers. Skill acquisition and strength levels are two completely different things. Therefore, they should be trained separately, and with different methods. In order to optimize the performance of a specific skill or movement, it needs to be practiced EXACTLY as it is performed in competition. It has been shown that each activity or movement has it.s own neuromuscular pathway, and that just because a movement is similar does NOT mean there will be a positive transfer or carryover of skill. In order to maximize performance the individual should attempt to perfect their movement or skill with endless hours of practice. The goal of practice should be to improve the technique, accuracy, and increase the speed at which the skill can be performed. This topic was addressed earlier in the section titled .Increase Force..

Genetic Potential

This is the factor that I have found to have the greatest impact on human performance. Genetic potential is something many people overlook. Regardless of what methods of training I use, I will never be a world-class marathoner. I can train twice a week or I can train 5 hours a day, it still won.t change the fact that my body wasn't designed to excel at endurance activities. I hear of too many coaches and trainers having people follow dangerous training programs in an attempt to drastically improve their performance. This is not to say that you cannot improve performance. When training yourself or a competitive athlete, always set realistic goals. As stated earlier, the best thing to do is utilize the most effective methods available and work hard!

Differences between Functional Training and Machine Based Training

Most, if not all of the so-called functional exercises, fail to supply constant and variable resistance. Most quality machines supply constant tension and variable resistance based on the strength curve of the particular muscle, and track proper joint function.

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For example, compare dumbbell bicep curls on a Swiss ball to a bicep curl on a quality machine (such as Hammer Strength.) While performing the dumbbell curl, there is no tension on the biceps in the bottom or top positions. The resistance is greatest when the dumbbell is perpendicular to the floor. The amount of stimulus is also decreased due to the fact that the individual must balance his/her self on the ball. While using a machine, there is constant tension on the biceps and the amount of tension varies during the exercise based on the strength curve of the biceps muscle. Which is going to make the individual stronger? Which is going to stimulate more muscle fibers in the biceps?

In my opinion, machine based training is by far superior if the goal is to increase strength, and/or muscle tissue. Keep in mind that more muscle equates to a faster, stronger, and better athlete, providing they practice their specific skill or movement.

This is not to say that functional exercises serve no purpose. There are benefits to functional exercise; just not as many as some people are lead to believe. Exercise selection and the training methods used should be based on the individual's goals. Instances where functional training may be effective would be in individuals who need to improve balance, stability, and neuromuscular coordination. Below is a chart that shows the differences between Functional Training and Machine Based Training.

Machine-Based Training	Functional Training
7 Provides constant and variable resistance	7 Very effective at improving balance, stability, and coordination
7 Movement tracks proper joint function	7 Does NOT effectively overload musculature
7 Effectively overloads musculature (if used properly)	7 Does NOT provide optimal transfer of skill performance
7 Safer to perform	7 Very difficult to measure and monitor progress
7 Many machines available to work every muscle in the body	7 Higher chance of injury

Conclusion

Functional training obviously has some benefit, and can be a great addition to a well-designed strength program. However, I personally feel it should never take the place of a structured strength training routine. I recommend using a combination approach, which utilizes machines, free-weights, bodyweight, balls, bands, and anything that is going to deliver the desired results. Always remember that training for strength and/or increases in muscle tissue and training for skill are two completely different things. When designing or assessing a training program the following questions should be asked. What is the goal? Is it time efficient? Is it safe? Is it delivering the desired results? Is it optimal?

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Top

Success with Strength Training

Strength training is the most effective way to turn your body into a fat burning machine and stay in great shape! It is the most productive form of exercise there is! In order to be successful with strength training there are some basic principles that must be followed if you want to receive the many benefits which strength training has to offer! The three most critical factors are progressive overload, intensity, and recovery.

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Progressive overload simply means that you must force your muscles to work harder each time. That means you can't use the same weight every workout, regardless of how many sets or reps you do. The best way to do this is by attempting to increase the resistance / weight used and, or increase the number of repetitions performed at each workout.

Intensity is also very important. You must force your body to increase its strength. For example, if you typically do 3 sets of 10 reps on the leg press at 115 pounds, and your legs are capable of doing 16 reps, why is your body going to make any improvements? Your body will only add muscle if you force it to work at a higher level than it is used to. The most effective way to overload your muscles is to perform one or two sets per exercise, and continue each set to muscular failure. That means continuing each set until no more repetitions are possible. Challenge yourself!

Once you have overloaded the target muscle group you must then allow for proper recovery and over compensation. This means you must rest long enough to allow for recovery of the targeted muscle group, the nervous system, refill glycogen stores (Energy stored within your muscles), and also allow enough time for the muscles to make improvements or increases. This process takes time. Generally, it takes between 2-7 days to recover from a strength workout! The harder you work the longer it takes your body to repair. Don't short-circuit your progress by strength training too often!

Basic Guidelines for Successful Strength Training

- Strength train no more than three times per week!

- Perform 1-2 sets per exercise!
- Choose 1-2 exercises for small muscle groups and 2-3 for large muscle groups. (ex. 2-3 exercises for legs, back, chest, and 1-2 for arms, shoulders, etc.)
- Choose no more than 8-10 exercises and work hard on them! . Always keep a record of all workouts! . Take each set to failure or fatigue!
- Perform each exercise SLOWL V! Force the muscle to do the work -- NOT momentum!
- As soon as you see a slow down in progress it's time to make a change to your program!

Below are some sample workouts and frequently asked questions regarding strength training.

Full-body Workout 1-2 x per week (approx. 30-40 mins.)

Lat pull-down 2 sets Chest press 2 sets Leg press 2 sets
Lateral raise 1 set Bicep curl 1 set
Triceps pushdown 1 set Leg curl 1 set
Leg extension 1 set

Upper / Lower Split

2-3 x per week (approx. 25-40 mins)

A. Upper

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Seated row 2 sets
Shoulder press 2 sets
Lat pull-down 1 set
Pectoral fly 1 set
Lateral raise 1 set
Bicep curl 1 set
Triceps pushdown 1 set

B. Lower

Leg curl 2 sets
Glute machine 1 set
Leg press 2 sets
Leg extension 1 set

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How do I lose the flab on the back of my arm or my spare tire?

A. It is physically impossible to only lose fat in one area. What you can do is decrease body fat by burning more calories than you consume. Increase muscle tissue with strength training and burn more calories all day long, even while you are sleeping!

Q. How often should I strength train if my goal is to burn fat?

A. 2-3 times per week would be great! You will build muscle tissue, which burns calories 24 hours a day, and you will decrease the chance for excess calories to be stored as fat!

Q. What if I don't want to bulk up? I just want to tone.

A. If it were that easy to bulk or get big nearly every guy in the gym would be huge] Women generally don't have the genetic potential to build large muscles due to hormonal differences. Plus, don't forget that adding muscle tissue to your body is a good thing! It makes everything you do much easier, reduces the chance for injury, and increases your metabolism!

Q. How many sets and repetitions should I do?

A. This will vary depending upon your goal. If you are training to increase strength, due fewer sets but higher intensity (1-2 sets to failure per exercise). If training for muscle size, perform multiple sets (2-4 sets, but only 1 to failure). The number of repetitions will vary also depending upon the speed at which you move the weight and your goals. In general, shoot for 8-12 reps.

Q. What are the benefits of strength training?

A. Strength training, if done correctly, can make some major changes to your body and mind! Here are just a few:

- Increased metabolism
- Increased strength and flexibility
- Increased muscle tone
- 4. Reduced stress levels

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Top

3 Secrets to Thinner Thighs and a Smaller Waistline

Millions, if not billions of dollars are spent each year by people trying to reshape their hips and thighs, yet few of these people ever achieve the shape they desire.
I've spent the past 7 years helping people, primarily women, target the hips and thighs I have found that there are 3 things you must do to be successful at reshaping the hips and thighs.
So are you ready to learn the 3 simple steps?
Ok. here we go.

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- Stop the storage of new fat!

Exercising is pointless if later that day or the next you are adding more fat. One thing you must fully understand is this: we don't store fat due to a lack of exercise, we store fat because we supply too many calories at a time. So exercising to lose fat is a waste of time unless you can stop storing new fat and the most effective method of stopping the storage of new fat is to stabilize energy levels.
Many people don't even understand what energy is. Energy isn't how you feel, energy is the amount of fuel in your body, more specifically, it's the amount of fuel in the blood stream. So you can have no fuel in the blood stream yet feel fine and vice versa. The .energy. that most people is actually more determined by the blood flow in the body. The greater the blood flow and circulation the more oxygen and nutrients your body receives, more efficiently, and to portions of the body that normally don't receive as much blood flow.

This however, is not energy. This is simply how you feel. Energy is directly related to fuel available in the body, which is what you eat. So to simplify it energy levels are controlled by what you eat.
The human body is constantly burning calories, 24 hours a day and the amount varies based on how active you are at different points throughout the day. So the key to stopping the storage of new fat is to only give the body the amount of fuel it needs. For example, if your body needs 400 calories but you give it 700, there's extra and there's only two places the extra calories can go: muscles cells or fat cells.

The first place the body wants to send the extra calories is to the muscles cells but most of the time they are full so there's only one other place to go: FAT cells! So your goal is **to MATCH YOUR EATING TO YOUR ACTIVITY LEVEL . GIVE YOUR BODY ONLY WHAT IT NEEDS**. The next question is, how do you know what your body needs? Well, it varies from person to person and no number or point system can do that for you. The easiest way to figure it out is too continue eating what you eat now, provided your weight is not going up, but break it up into smaller and more frequent feedings.

You've probably hear it before, .Eat 5-6 meals per day.. Well, there's a good reason for it. Eating smaller and more frequent meals/snacks makes it easier to give the right amount of food and not extra. This is a complex topic and one that requires a more detailed explanation, which I do not have time for in this article.

Just remember this:
Stop the storage of new fat before you even think about trying to burn off the existing fat!
If this left you confused, I recommend you get a copy of my book, Burn Fat FAST! which is available online at www.burn-fat-fast.com or by calling 240-731-3724.
Ok, on to step 2.

- Increase metabolism with progressive strength training and high intensity cardiovascular exercise.

This is easier said then done. I speak with so many women who say .I don't know why it's not working, I strength train 2-3 times each week.. Well, just because you exercise doesn't mean it's going to give you the desired result.

The one reason I think most people are unsuccessful with exercise is the lack of progression. They do the same exercises all the time, using the same weight, and never do anything to make it more challenging. You must give the body a reason to change.

There are numerous ways to be progressive with exercise but here are just a few.
For strength training:

- increase the weight and or repetitions
- rest less between exercises
- change exercises frequently

For cardiovascular or aerobic exercise:

1. increase speed
2. increase time/distance
3. increase resistance/incline
4. change exercises frequently
5. perform intervals

If you have questions about strength training or cardiovascular exercise please check out the articles I.ve written on the subjects online at www.achieve-fitness.com/free_resources.htm or call 240-731-3724 and I will be happy to answer your questions.
Ok. on to step 3

3. Target those trouble spots
Let's say that you are really trying to tighten and tone your hips and thighs. Rather than waste your time on the inner/outer thigh machine week after week, you should incorporate some of the techniques I described above and use with caution my BLASTING technique which I'll cover now.

Just as it sounds you are trying to really shock the muscles into making large improvements in a short period of time. Normally you would strength train a muscle group once or twice a week at a moderate to hard intensity level. When you are trying to BLAST an area you train it more often, perform more sets and reps, and with higher intensity.

Here's a sample strength training program that uses multiple techniques combined over a 5 week period for a BLASTING effect on the hips and thighs:

Workout A
-Leg curl
-Leg extension
-Glute machine / raise

Workout B
-Leg press (wide stance)
-Hamstring bridge
-Wall sit

Workout C
-Stationary lunge
-Leg curl (no rest to next exercise)
-Squat

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	Upper Body		A Lower Body		Upper Body
2	B Lower 2 sets 15-20 reps		C Lower 1 set . slow 8-12 reps		B Lower 3 sets 6-10 reps
3	Upper		A Lower . moderate workout		Upper
4	C Lower . 2 sets 6-10 reps		Upper		A Lower . 3 sets 10-15 reps

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	slow				
5	B Lower . 4 sets 10-12 reps		Upper		C Lower . 2 sets 12-15 reps

This is just a quick example I just came up with off the top of my head and it may not be right for you but I just want you to get the point. You need force change. The human body doesn't like it. it disrupts things. I should also say that techniques like this should NOT be uses often as you can quickly and easily over train and that does not help you meet your goals.

If you apply just some of the techniques I talked about you will be sure to see some noticeable if not dramatic changes. Just remember, work hard and smart!
If you would like to learn more about BLASTING or progressive exercise please give me a call at 240-731-3724 or email me at jesse@achieve-fitness.com

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5 Tips to Get That Beach Body FAST!

by Jesse Cannone CFT, CPRS

Tip # 1 - STOP storing new body fat!

It amazes me how many people start an exercise program to lose weight yet end up just packing on some more new fat later that day or the next. So the number one goal should be to first stop storing new body fat. You can do this very easily by eating small, balanced meals or snacks every two to three hours. There are multiple reasons why frequent feedings not only boost metabolism but also prevent storing new fat. Here are just a few:

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Frequent eating conditions the body to use fat for energy because the body used to getting fuel and doesn't need to or tend to store is much fat. Part of it is because it doesn't worry about when the next feeding will be. I'm sure you've probably heard of the starvation mechanism and know what it is - basically the longer you go between feedings to worse it is as your body slows down the rate at which it is burning fuel to conserve energy. The body is then more likely to hold onto the food as body fat just in case it has to go another long extended period of time without food.
By eating smaller and more frequent meals/snacks you lessen the likely hood of providing too many calories at one time and therefore make it much less likely that you'll store any new fat.

Tip # 2 – short mini-workouts
I know you're busy as most people are and you don't have time for marathon-style workout sessions 3 to five times a week. Most people don't need to exercise that much or that often and nor do you.
Short bouts of exercise are as effective and sometimes even more effective if done progressively than traditional exercise routines. The reason is that these short mini-workouts can be done daily (even multiple times per day) and this gives your metabolism a boost more frequently.
Just 10 to 15 minutes of moderate to high-intensity cardiovascular or aerobic exercise every day will increase blood flow and circulation, burn some extra calories, and most importantly give you that little boost.

Another reason is short mini-workouts are more convenient and practical for most people. Even if you have no equipment at home you can still get that all so important boost in metabolism. Here are just a few ideas:
1. run upstairs and walk back down run – repeat that for five or so minutes and you'll be exhausted. Plus, you'll totally elevate your metabolism and increase blood flow and circulation and have you feeling great!
2. perform 10 minutes of calisthenics (jumping jacks, kick butts, high knees, jog in place, mountain climbers, etc)
3. take a quick 10 minute power walk. Walk nearly as fast as you can and over time try to increase your distance and/or speed
Mini-workouts can work extremely well so don't be afraid to experiment.

Tip # 3 – Stay hydrated!
Fat metabolism IS affected by how well hydrated your body is. People totally underestimate the effective that water has when it comes a fat loss and also on overall health. Over 70 percent of the processes that the place your body take place in water and things like organs can't function optimally without enough water.
There's still a debate on how much you need and I don't think anyone will ever know for sure but to play it safe I would recommend you strive to drink at least 4 cups or more each day – and NO, tea and juice don't count. Yes, they have water but they also often have sugar and other ingredients that actually limit the amount that is absorbed and used.

Tip # 4 – Exercise <u>MUST</u> be Progressive!
Training progressively with strength training is probably one of the most important forms of exercise you can do. Plus, this principle applies to all forms of exercise and fitness. So when you're talking about reshaping the body, boosting metabolism, and burning off that excess body fat, you have to ensure that nearly all of your workouts are progressive in nature.
Give the body a reason to change! Just because you go to the gym and do strength training a few times a week doesn't mean anything – you have to provide a stimulus or reason for the body to make improvements.

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The number of sets and reps doesn't matter, what matters is that the muscles and systems are subjected to a greater than stress than what the muscles are used to. Here are some general guidelines: one to three sets per exercise, as many reps as possible in good form on each set, perform slow controlled reps to maximize muscle involvement, change exercises frequently, etc.

If you need more info on strength training and additional techniques to make continues progress please check out some of my other articles here: http://www.achieve-fitness.com/free_resources.htm

Tip #5 – BLAST those trouble spots

When putting together your fitness plan, it's critical that you incorporate advanced techniques for those dreaded trouble spots that never seem to improve. There are many ways to force those areas to respond and you need to make sure you don't overuse or abuse these techniques.

Here's an example of how to BLAST a body part…
Target area: glutes/hips Workout schedule: 3 x per week
Workout A - Monday
-glute machine (kickbacks)
-leg press
-leg curl
-reverse crunch
-side bends

Workout B – Wednesday
-vertical row
-overhead press
-rear deltoid fly
-bicep curl
-tricep pushdown

Workout C – Friday
-sumo squat (wide stance)
-floor bridge
-stationary lunge
-torso rotations
-leg lowering

You would of course use advanced techniques like strip sets, slow reps, negatives, high rep sets, etc to really target the glutes and hips. The key is to shock the target area with increased frequency, intensity, and volume over the short term (3-6 weeks maximum).

A word of caution…
If you are just starting a program or are not used to intense exercise I recommend you build up to it slowly and as always it's recommended that you check with your physician before starting a program.

I should also say there far more you can do but this is a good place to start and should have you both looking and feeling great by the time you break out that swimsuit!

Well, there you have it. 5 tips that will make all the difference. So get to it and if you have questions or need help please feel free to ask. You can reach me at jesse@achieve-fitness.com or by visiting my website www.achieve-fitness.com

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Take Control of Your Metabolism: Quick Tips for Increased Muscle Tone, Faster Fat Burning, and Energy Levels Like a 9 Year Old!

by Jesse Cannone CFT, CPRS, CSPN

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So many people are talking about how slow their metabolism is and why they need to start taking the latest diet supplement scam yet they don't even understand how the human metabolism works. So before I even go into how to speed yours up, I want to first go over some of the basics.

What is metabolism?
Although there are many scientific ways for me explain it, and I could make it seem really confusing like most of the so-called experts do, but I won't. I'm going to give you my extremely simple and easy to understand definition...
metabolism is the rate at which your body burns calories to sustain life

I should also note that your body, yes yours, burns calories 24 hours a day, everyday – regardless of whether or not you workout. Remember that your body needs energy all the time, even while you're asleep and that is why skipping meals is the absolute worst thing you can do if your goal is to lose weight (body fat).
Before we go any further let's talk about what affects metabolism...

What affects metabolism?
What do you think has the **biggest** impact on your metabolism? Activity levels? Your Thyroid? Age? **WRONG! WRONG!** and **WRONG!** Activity levels, Thyroid function, and age do affect metabolism but not nearly as much as...
any idea? It's muscle tissue! The more muscle you have the more calories you burn regardless of how active you are, how old you are, etc. It's live tissue and it's there working for you and burning calories 24 hours a day – each and every day!

Here's a list of some of the factors affecting metabolism in order of greatest impact to least:

1. muscle tissue (you already know why this is on the top of the list)
2. meal frequency (the longer you go between meals the more your metabolism slows down to conserve energy)
2. activity level (important but doesn't make any difference if you don't match your eating to your expenditure)

- food choices (ex. low-fat diets tend to result in poor hormone production which leads to a slower metabolism)
- hydration (over 70% of bodily functions take place in water – not enough water causes all your systems to slow down and unnecessary stress)
- genetics (some people have higher metabolisms than others – you can't change genetics but you can still win the battle!)
- hormone production and function (think you have a slow thyroid? it's not likely – before you go blame it on the thyroid first stabilize your blood sugar and throw in some progressive exercise 2-3 times each week)
- stress (stress also can slow metabolism by placing extra stress and strain on numerous systems. plus, many people tend to overeat when "stressed out")

Why does it slow down?
How many times have you heard someone say, "as soon as you hit 30 your metabolism slows down"? Maybe you've said it. I know I hear it all the time and I got tired of hearing it so I did a little research and found that the metabolism does NOT slow down significantly due to aging but DOES due to a lack of muscle. And, you don't lose muscle quickly due to aging either but due to a decrease or lack of physical stress.

So, the major cause of a slowing metabolism is three fold...
1. you lose muscle due to the lack of physical stress

2. your body cannibalizes muscle when it needs energy but you won't supply any because you are "dieting" and skipping meals
3. your activity levels tend to decrease as you get older

So now that we know the problem... what's the solution? Address those 3 issues! I've found through years of experience helping hundreds of people, that increasing your metabolism and getting rid of that excess body fat can often times be quite easy! Yet you'll hear of all these experts telling you how hard it is and why you need to buy their new diet program, supplement, or fitness contraption.
It's not that hard, it doesn't have to be confusing, and you don't need any of that crap! All you need is an understanding of how your body works and the willingness to make some small changes.
Here's my basic formula for jump starting your metabolism:

Step 1 - Stop the storage of new fat
It doesn't make any sense to start an exercise program if you just end up adding new fat later that day. This is a problem that is very common among people who start an exercise in an attempt to lose weight. See the problem is this...
We don't get fat due to a lack of exercise – we get fat because we supply the body with more calories than it needs at a given time. So the solution has nothing to do with exercise – it's all about your eating! And I'm not saying you have to eat low-fat, super clean and healthy diet consisting of salad and tofu only. You can still eat the foods you like IF you can give the body just the amount it needs.

The key is to give the body the energy it needs, but just that amount and not a bunch extra because extra is extra is extra, it doesn't matter what it's from. Salad can be stored as fat, celery can be stored as fat – if it results in extra it can be stored as fat. I should also note that not all extra energy is stored in the fat cells and I will touch on that later.
So forget about trying to burn off any fat unless you can first stop storing new fat! Again, you do that by matching your eating to your activity level. This means small, balanced meals or snacks every 2-3 hours and the amount of calories in each feeding should depend on how active you are at that time of day.

Step 2 – Attack the existing fat
This requires a combination approach consisting of stable blood sugar/energy levels, and progressive cardiovascular/aerobic exercise and strength training.

We already talked about how important stable blood sugar and energy levels are and how to match your eating to your activity level so now I'd like to cover the exercise part of the equation.
In order for the exercise to even be worth your time you must be sure it's progressive. Just because you run on the treadmill for 30 minutes three times a week, that doesn't mean your body has to burn off that unwanted body fat! You have to force the body to make changes and improvements and the ONLY way to do that is to consistently provide a stimulus or stress that is greater than what the body is used to.

Here are some general guidelines on how you can make your exercise progressive and productive:
Strength training
- Change exercises frequently (every 2-4 weeks)
- Increase resistance
- Perform more reps
- Slower reps
- Advanced techniques

Cardiovascular training
- Increase speed/resistance
- Perform intervals
- Increase distance traveled
- Cross train by performing numerous activities

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For more specific techniques please check out the all the great articles on metabolism and fitness in the free resources section of my website here: http://www.achieve-fitness.com/free_resources.htm
I should also say that it is extremely important that you have a well thought out and detailed plan to follow. You can't just say "ok, now I know what to do" and then try a little of this here and little of that there. You need a roadmap. If you are serious about achieving your weight loss and fitness goals I highly recommend you get the help of a professional. Whether that means one on one, personal fitness training or just a do-it-yourself fitness plan – your chances of success are much greater.

In closing, please remember, it doesn't have to be confusing. Hopefully this information has shown you how easy it can be if you know what you are doing. If you have any questions or would like to learn more about how you can guarantee your fitness success, please visit my website http://www.achieve-fitness.com or you can give me a call at 240-731-3724. While your'e at my website be sure to sign up for my free email newsletter, ***Fitness Suc cess News*** – it's full of great articles, tips, healthy recipes, contests, and more!

Jesse Cannone is a certified personal fitness trainer, post-rehab specialist, nutritionist, and a national fitness presenter. He is also the author of " Burn Fat FAST!" and " A Bride's Guide To Fast Fitness + Weight Loss" in addition to many other popular fitness articles. He is known for his hard-hitting and to the point style and offers a great free email newsletter called "Fitness Success News" which you can subscribe to at his website http://www.achieve-fitness.com

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Separating Fitness Fact from Fitness Fiction

By Jon Gestl, CSCS

More so now than ever before, fitness information is available wherever we turn. Whether it is found on television, in books, in on-line resources or even from your best friend, information about fitness and health is constantly being thrown at us. We certainly don't suffer from a lack of information, but from too much of it. Research-based info gets confused with popular belief, one person's facts get confused with another's outdated beliefs. Pretty soon, we are left not knowing whom to believe, and sometimes it's far easier to just give up.

The first step in achieving our fitness goals is to look at some popular misconceptions and separate fitness fiction from fitness fact:

1. **Genetics have everything to do with how I look.**
   Go ahead and blame your parents all you want for your genetics. Spend some time feeling good and sorry for the body you were given. Feel better? Good. Now it's time to do something about what you *can* control.

   When people talk of "bad genetics" they are usually talking about metabolism. While the two are related, they are not the same thing. Metabolism is the way the body processes or burns through food. The higher the metabolism, the more calories the body burns. The lower the metabolism, the less fuel the body burns and the more it is stored as body fat.

   Genetics certainly influence metabolism, but you ARE in control of many other factors, including activity level, food intake and body composition. We didn't choose the body we have, but we can choose what we do with it

2. **The best way to lose weight is by doing a lot of aerobic exercise.**

Aerobic exercise is wonderful…it strengthens the heart and lungs, burns calories, and there is nothing like a jog through the park on a sunny day. But in and of itself, it is not the most effective long-term method for successful weight loss. Next time you are at the health club, take a look at the people who do nothing but aerobic exercise. Then take a look at the people who are spending their time lifting weights. Individuals who correctly incorporate strength training in addition to cardiovascular exercise not only have better looking bodies, but are stronger and have a lower percentage of body fat as well

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Strength training helps to increase muscle mass that will then burn calories throughout the day and night even when you are NOT exercising. This is one way metabolism is raised. Cardiovascular exercise is very important, but weight training provides optimal results.

3. **But If I work out with weights, I'll get bulky…I just want to tone.**
   This statement is commonly heard from women. Usually those who have seen women's bodybuilding competitions on TV and thought "Wow, why is that *guy* wearing a bikini?"

   Women's hormones will not allow them to build huge, ripped muscles like men because they lack the amount of testosterone necessary to do this. The only way a woman will look like a man is to alter her hormonal levels, usually with the use of steroids. Unfortunately, many bodybuilders choose to do this.

   If a woman works out with weights on a regular basis, and eats supportively, then changes WILL occur without the use of steroids. "Toning" is the same thing as building attractive, strong, and shapely muscles. A woman can build muscles and not look like a man. If building huge muscles were that easy, we'd all be walking around looking like Arnold Schwarzenegger.

4. **All I need to do is starve myself and I'll lose the weight.**
   Starvation WILL result in weight loss. So will chopping off a body part and it makes about as much sense. The problem with severely reducing caloric intake is that once your body realizes it is being starved, it will literally hold onto stored fat and refuse to let it go. The body then begins to use other stored nutrients to fuel activity, namely protein. Once this occurs, muscle mass decreases and so does metabolism.

   In fact, in order to burn fat and build muscle you *need* to eat. Preferably 5 to 6 smaller meals per day.

   Instead of reducing the amount of meals, care should be taken in controlling *portion* sizes.

5. **In order to lose the weight, I need to eliminate all the fat (or, carbohydrates, or protein) in my diet.**
   Fat, carbohydrates and protein are called *macronutrients.* You need all of them for survival, along with vitamins, minerals, and water. Giving up a nutrient in the diet is like saying, "I need to lose weight…maybe I'll give up all the zinc in my diet." It won't work and will definitely cause problems.

   Reducing or eliminating certain nutrients has gained popularity over the years with various fad diets. These diets have been successful in short-term weight loss; however, much of the weight loss is in lean body mass and water. This invariably lowers the metabolism, resulting in increased fat storage and eventually weight gain.

   In order to support lean body mass, fuel workouts and encourage fat loss, many nutritional experts

   suggest a 40-20-40 breakdown of these nutrients for each meal. That is, 40 percent of calories from

   protein, 20 percent from fat, and 40 percent from carbohydrates.

6. **I don't have the time necessary to devote to exercise.**

It's funny…we never hear anyone say, "I don't have the time to brush my teeth" or "Sorry, I don't have the time to bathe". Let's face it--we all lead very busy lives. Family, career, friends, projects, trips, you name it… our plates are pretty full. But the real problem here is the belief that you NEED a huge amount of

time for exercise. You can spend 30 minutes a day and grab an effective workout. You don't need to spend all day and night in a gym.

Look at your schedule and you'll see what options you have: Get up 1/2 hour early. Workout during lunch. Once the kids are in bed, pop in that workout tape. There are 168 hours in a week. Spending about 3 or 4 of those hours in pursuit of health is not really that much to ask of yourself, is it? In order to take care of ourselves, we need to MAKE the time.

7. **I don't have the money it takes to look good—I can't afford to join a gym, buy a bunch of equipment, or hire a trainer.**
   The fitness industry is a multi-billion dollar industry. It IS expensive to join the latest posh health club, hire the best (probably just the most expensive) personal trainer in the city, or to purchase the latest home gym equipment. Even if you can afford all of these things, however, there is no guarantee that you will reach your fitness goals.

   You can effectively exercise in your own home without any equipment…what about pushups, squats, lunges, and crunches? You think you don't have weights? Try a backpack loaded with books. Or that suitcase in the closet. Look around your home and you'll find a dozen options for no-cost equipment.

   You can always purchase exercise tools for a minimum investment, which will afford you even more variety. A couple exercise bands, one or two sets of hand weights, and an inflatable exercise ball should run no more than about $50. These are items you can find in any sporting goods store. Effective exercise does not require lifting chrome-plated weights designed in funky shapes.

   If you can't afford a trainer on a regular basis, then hire one to instruct you on proper exercise technique and hire her to design a program you can do on your own. Meet once every two weeks to evaluate your progress.

8. **The answer to fitness lies in that new—(choose one)—ab machine, thigh cream, fat-loss pill**.
   You've been watching late-night infomercials, again, haven't you? The achievement of your fitness goals is not dependent on you giving your credit card number to an operator for "four easy payments of $39.99". Most of these "products" are scams or at the very least not necessary for you to get in shape. If something sounds too good to be true, it most likely is. Next time you see an infomercial for the newest, revolutionary "solution", turn off the TV and do a set of crunches.

9. **I'm too tired to exercise.**
   If you are not working out, you probably ARE tired. And will continue to be. The body was made to be active and move. Regular exercise and good nutrition will actually increase energy. If you get up and move, chances are you'll want to continue to do so.

10. **I don't have the willpower.**
    This is the saddest belief. I hear all the time people claim how lazy, unmotivated, and depressed they are. How they can't stick with anything and lack the willpower to exercise and eat right. Surprisingly these are the same people who have successful professional careers, are wonderful parents, and take an active role in their communities. These people do not lack willpower…they lack correct information.

    More often than not, individuals who claim they lack willpower for exercise and proper nutrition are lacking not willpower, but correct information. Usually, they hold many of the incorrect ideas about health and fitness previously discussed. After numerous unsuccessful attempts at diet and exercise, based on the false beliefs previously discussed, they feel that they are at fault and give up. It is important to remember that *they* didn't fail, but the *information* they had failed them.

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Leading a healthy lifestyle and becoming fit starts with obtaining the facts about exercise, nutrition, and how to incorporate both into one's life. If the information we have does not work, then it is time to use new information that does. Ignore the fiction—use the facts.

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Top **10 Ways to Rev Up The Metabolism**

By Jon Gestl, CSCS

You sit down in the employee cafeteria and you see her again—that co-worker with the body you'd give anything to look like. She seems to eat anything she wants and doesn't seem to gain any weight.

Meanwhile, you gnaw on your daily lunch of carrot and celery sticks and wonder why you're gaining. What does she know that your don't? Is it all genetics and you are just one of the unlucky doomed to live in a body you are powerless to change? Actually, the answer may be something that you do have control over: your metabolism.

Metabolism is simply the rate at which the body processes energy, or burns calories. Think of metabolism as the setting on the body's "furnace". The higher the metabolism, the more calories your body burns, even at rest.

Factors which influence metabolism include genetics, age, sex, activity level, food intake and body composition. Go ahead and blame your parents for genetics and those factors which you can do nothing about, but you do have control over your activity level, food intake, and body composition. These elements play a crucial role in your body's metabolic rate.

An important factor to understand regarding metabolism is that the body's primary fuel source during lower energy output activities (sleep, sitting at your desk, watching TV, riding the bus, etc.) is fat. These activities occupy most of your time. When you increase your metabolic rate, you begin to burn more calories in response to all the activities. And the more likely that your body will be using stored fat as an energy source.

The main focus of any worthwhile fitness plan should be to increase metabolism so the body's furnace is set at a higher level. Some ways to increase metabolism include:

1. **Build more muscle**. More of the body's energy is required to maintain muscle mass. The more muscle mass you have, the more calories your body will burn. In fact, about 50 calories are consumed for every one pound of muscle mass per day. Therefore, the more muscle you carry, the more calories your body burns—even at rest.

2. **Moderate aerobic exercise**. You don't need to spend hours each day on the treadmill, bike or running path. The American College of Sports Medicine recommends as little as 20 minutes of aerobic activity 3 to 5 days per week to achieve fitness, health, and weight management goals. In fact, excessive aerobic exercise may result in the actual loss of lean body mass if caloric requirements are not met, which in turn lowers the metabolism.

3. **Increase activity throughout the day**. Instead of using the elevator to get to your fourth floor office, use the stairwell. Park farther away from the supermarket door instead of trying the find the closest parking spot. Spend one of your work breaks during the day walking the office halls. Lose the remote control. The point is to get up and MOVE, especially if your job requires you to sit during long periods of time. It also gets you in the habit of increasing your activity level on a regular basis.

4. **Eat like a horse, not a bear.** Sound crazy? Think about it. Horses graze on small amounts of food throughout the course of a day. Subsequently, they have very lean, muscular frames. Bears, on the other hand, eat large amounts of food spaced further apart. They carry far more body fat on their frames. Humans are no different. Research supports that the production of thyroid hormones can be negatively affected by repeated bouts of dieting and calorie restriction. Five or six meals spaced evenly from 2.5 to 3 hours make it easier for the body to digest throughout the day, this increases metabolism over the long term.

5. **Avoid fad diets.** Fad diets are usually those popularized in the media. They usually call for severely reducing or even eliminating nutrients. “Eat no carbs.” “Eliminate all fat.” “Eat only protein.” Or focus only on one kind of food like The Grapefruit Diet, The Cabbage Soup Diet or “Eat nothing but salad.” Current research by the USDA on unbalanced meal plans tells us that too much or too little of any nutrient is likely to result in problems with long-term weight management.

6. **Skip the fast food.** Fast food is typically loaded with fat. Fat is relatively easy for the body to absorb and does not require the energy expenditure that protein and carbohydrates do in digestion and assimilation. A gram of fat yields nearly twice the calories as a gram of protein or carbohydrates. Replacing caloric consumption from high amounts of fat to equal portions of protein and carbohydrates stimulate greater caloric usage. However, be sure to not completely eliminate dietary fat. Instead:

7. **Eat balanced meals.** Meals should contain adequate and balanced amounts of protein, carbohydrates and fat. In order to support lean body mass, fuel workouts and encourage fat loss, many nutritional experts suggest a 40-20-40 breakdown of these nutrients for each meal. That is, 40 percent of calories from protein, 20 percent from fat, and 40 percent from carbohydrates. An example of a “balanced meal” would be a chicken breast, baked potato, and broccoli. And remember what Mom always said: “Eat your veggies.”

8. **Drink more water.** Thirst is often mistaken for hunger. Chronic dehydration can also result in mental and physical sluggishness. Be sure to consume at least 64 oz. (8 cups) daily and more when you are exercising.

9. **Deal with stress**. Stress increases hormones, such as cortisol, which encourage your body to store fat instead of burning it. Try yoga, meditation, listening to calming music. Exercise, by the way, is a great stress reliever AND it will help to promote lean body mass.

10. **Get enough sleep**. Studies have shown that people who don’t get enough sleep have slower metabolisms. Get enough sleep so that you can awake in the morning relatively easily and are not tired throughout the day. Naps during the day can help, too.

While the time it takes for metabolism to increase varies per individual, you can expect to see changes in the body in as little as three to four weeks. The great thing about increasing metabolism is that it makes it easier to keep the extra pounds off over a longer period of time…your body is literally turned into a fat-burning machine.

Increasing your metabolic rate should be the primary goal of any fitness-related/weight loss program. It helps you to become one of those people who can seem to eat anything you want. Before you know it, *you’ll* have one of those bodies that everyone is dying to have.

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Top

Coffee, Caffeine and Fitness

Jon Gestl, CSCS

One look at a line at the local Starbucks in the morning and you don't need a lot of convincing as to the huge amount of coffee consumption in this country. The National Coffee Association found in 2000 that 54% of the U.S. adult population drinks coffee daily. Guess there's nothing like the first double espresso in the morning to clear the cobwebs from our heads so we can face the day. But what are the effects relating to fitness? If that grande-no-foam-double-whipped-extra-shot-no-fat latte gives us the get-up-and-go to start our day at work, will it do the same if we're headed to the gym?

Physiological Effects

The main ingredient in coffee that gives us that jolt is caffeine, a central nervous system stimulant. Caffeine is found naturally in coffee beans, tea leaves, and chocolate, and is a popular added ingredient in carbonated beverages and some over-the-counter medications such as cold remedies, diuretics, aspirin, and weight control aids. It is estimated that in the U.S., 75% of caffeine intake comes from coffee.

Caffeine stimulates the central nervous system by blocking adenosine, a neurotransmitter that normally causes a calming effect in the body. The resulting neural stimulation due to this blockage causes the adrenal glands to release adrenaline, the "fight or flight" hormone. Your heart rate increases, your pupils dilate, your muscles tighten up, and glucose is released into your blood stream for extra energy. Voila… you now have the caffeine buzz.

But wait…we're not done yet. Caffeine also increases dopamine. Dopamine activates the pleasure in parts of the brain. It has been suspected that this also contributes to caffeine addiction.

Physiologically, caffeine makes us you feel alert, pumps adrenaline to give you energy and changes dopamine production to make you feel good. Another espresso, anyone?

Ergogenic Effects of Caffeine to Performance

In addition to various psychological and physiological benefits, numerous studies have documented caffeine's ergogenic effect on athletic performance, particularly in regard to endurance. Studies show that caffeine ingestion prior to exercising extended endurance in moderately strenuous aerobic activity. Other studies researching caffeine consumption on elite distance runners and distance swimmers show increased performance times during exercise sessions lasting >90 minutes and <20 minutes, respectively, following caffeine consumption.

Despite effects on endurance, caffeine produced no effect on maximal muscular force in a study measuring voluntary and electrically stimulated muscle actions. Interestingly, however, the same study did show findings that suggest caffeine has an ergogenic effect on muscle during repetitive, low frequency stimulation.

Caffeine's positive performance-enhancing effects have been well documented. So much so that the International Olympic Committee placed a ban leading to disqualification for an athlete with urinary limits exceeding 12 mg/mL. Roughly 600 to 800mg of caffeine, or 4 to 7 cups of coffee, consumed over a 30-minute period would be enough to exceed this level and cause disqualification. The National Collegiate Athletic Association has a similar limit, set at 15 mg/mL.

Coffee: A Pre-Workout Drink?

Before you make Starbucks part of your pre-workout warm-up in order to harness the effects of caffeine, be aware that simply downing a grande may not give you similar benefits found in these studies. A recent Canadian study published in the Journal of Applied Physiology compared the effect of coffee and caffeine on run time to exhaustion. A group of nine men took part in five trials. Sixty minutes before each run, the men took one of the following:

1. A placebo

2. Caffeine capsules
3. De-caffeinated coffee with caffeine added
4. Regular coffee

Performance times were up to 10 times longer in subjects using the caffeine capsules, with no differences in times among the other trials. Since the level of caffeine absorption was similar during the caffeine trials, researchers concluded something in the coffee itself that interferes with caffeine's performance-enhancing effects. This makes sense considering that there are literally hundreds of compounds dissolved when coffee beans are roasted, ground and extracted. Results of this research suggest that if benefits of caffeine on endurance times are desired, caffeine capsules work better than coffee.

Caffeine and Creatine Supplementation
Although caffeine has been shown to increase endurance time, further research shows it may actually blunt the effect of creatine, a popular and well-researched compound known for its consistent ergogenic effects. In a study evaluating the effect of pre-exercise caffeine ingestion on both creatine stores and high-intensity exercise performance, caffeine totally counteracted any effects of creatine supplementation. It was suggested that individuals who creatine load should refrain from caffeine-containing foods and beverages if positive effects are desired.

The Downside of Caffeine
Despite coffee/caffeine's positive effects on psychological states and performance, there are numerous documented risks that must considered when consuming caffeine, whether for performance-enhancing effects or simply as a part of daily dietary consumption.

Caffeine stimulates the central nervous system and can produce restlessness, headaches, and irritability. Caffeine also elevates your heart rate and blood pressure. Over the long-term as your body gets used to caffeine, it requires higher amounts to get the same effects. Certainly, having your body in a state of hormonal emergency all day long isn't very healthy.

Caffeine is also a diuretic and causes a loss of fluid, which then leads to a dehydrating effect. This is obviously not conducive to fitness activities such as resistance training, as fluid is needed for the transfer of nutrients to facilitate muscular growth. It is also important when considering the further loss of fluid while exercising in hot environments.

Perhaps the most important long-term problem is the effect of caffeine on sleep. The half-life of caffeine in the body is about 6 hours. If you drink a big cup of coffee with 200 mg of caffeine at 4PM, at 10PM you still have about 100mg in your body. By 4AM, you still have 50mg floating in your system. Even though you may be able to sleep, you may not be able to obtain the restful benefits of deep sleep. What's worse, the cycle continues as you may use more and more caffeine in hopes of counteracting this deficit.

Coffee Conclusions
It is clear that caffeine has some benefits in relation to exercise performance. However, risks and problems are known as well. It has been suggested that most problems seem evident with very high consumption. The American Heart Association says that moderate coffee drinking (one or two cups per day) does not seem to be harmful for most people. As with everything else, balance seems to be the key to caffeine consumption and further research is needed to more clearly determine whether the performance-enhancing benefits of caffeine outweigh the potential risks.

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Top Sleep and Exercise: Partners in Fitness

Jon Gestl, CSCS

Participation in a regular exercise program shows numerous health and psychological benefits. It comes as no surprise that increased quality and quantity of sleep is one of them. This relationship between exercise and sleep may also have a flip side as well, as a growing body of research points to sleep's positive effect on fitness and exercise goals.

As for exercise effects on sleep, research has shown consistently positive results in quality of sleep obtained. Studies have shown that sedentary people who start exercising regularly boost the amount of time spent in slow-wave sleep, the phase of sleep believed to be the most restorative. They also report waking up less often during the night.

Quantity of sleep obtained following exercise has also been documented. After a 12-week aerobic and strength-training program, research subjects reported falling asleep faster and sleeping longer than before they'd started exercising.

There seems to be no support for the common assumption that exercise immediately prior to bedtime disrupts sleep patterns. The issue has not been adequately addressed in past research literature, since most studies' exercise protocols were completed at least 4 hours before sleep. However, recent research by Youngstedt and Kripke directly challenges this assumption. In aerobically fit subjects, sleep was not adversely affected by a 1-hour bout of exercise at 60% VO2 max or by 3 hours of exercise at 70% max completed 30 minutes before bedtime. Similar results from a population survey conducted by Vuori, Urponen, and Hasan show that exercise within 2 hours of bedtime improved or had not effect on sleep for most individuals. Since it is more convenient to exercise in the evening for many people, these results provide important information to assuage individuals' fears of evening exercise and it's effect on sleep.

There's also good news for those special populations who experience trouble with sleep patterns. Recent studies have also shown that exercise training may improve sleep among insomniacs. After a four-week protocol, subjects who received a treatment of as little as 45 minutes of brisk walking in the early evening experienced improvements in sleep patterns.

Older adults, another population known to have more sleep complaints than younger people, can also positively affect sleep patterns with moderate-intensity exercise. A study by King and colleagues found that older adult subjects, following a 16-week exercise program of low-impact aerobics, brisk walking or stationary cycling, showed significant improvement in sleep quality, sleep-onset, and sleep duration.

Common sense dictates that if we haven't been getting enough sleep (the popular 8 hours per night prescription), proper rebuilding of muscle tissue is less likely to occur effectively. Among athletes and fitness enthusiasts, it also stands to reason that consistent lack of sleep can result in over-training which impedes both performance and fitness goals. Recent studies have focused on this side of the exercise and sleep equation and results point to some interesting hormonal and chemical explanations of sleep's effect on exercise and fitness levels.

Researchers at the University of Chicago's endocrine rhythms laboratory discovered that skimping on sleep triggers a decrease in human growth hormone, which controls the body's ratio of fat to muscle. If HGH falls below the proper level, muscles will atrophy and fat will more likely build up, negating many of the positive effects of exercise.

It also appears that not getting the recommended 8 hours sets us up for some metabolic problems that will cause weight gain. After sleep deprivation, blood glucose tends to be h igher, insulin levels lower, and cortisol levels higher. There's additional evidence that the hormone leptin (secreted by fat cells) is influenced by sleep loss, and recent studies have shown that some people experience an increase in appetite after weigh t loss, so they eat more.

In the quest to obtain better health and meet our fitness goals, we all search for the right combination of activity, supplements and food to help us along. Results from exercise research keep pointing to a combination of lifestyle choices, rather than one “magic bullet”, as the best method for health. Sleep is definitely an important component in this lifestyle equation, and proper sleep habits are vital in achieving our goals.

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Top 6 Advantages of Free Weights vs. Machines

Jon Gestl, CSCS

Meet Sarah.

About a year ago, Sarah saw an infomercial about a “multi-unit” workout machine. The announcer called it a “revolutionary” piece of equipment, claiming that people would see results in “just 2-4 weeks”. It exercised all major body parts and the female model shown using the machine said it “was safer and more effective than free weights.”

Intimidated by gyms her whole life, Sarah knew having her own home gym would be the key to her finally getting into shape. She had heard that machines were safer than free weights. Besides, the machine came with “easy to follow video instructions”. The price was steep, but as Sarah imagined changing her body, she got her credit called and grabbed the phone.

On the day of delivery, Sarah was surprised to see it took up twice the space she was told it would, limiting space in her already cramped den. Excited to get started, she popped in the video, and hopped on the machine. Sarah soon found that she, at 5’3”, was too small to fit on the machine for some of the exercises. She continued on anyway, trying to ignore the fact that her lower back and knees were starting to hurt a little.

Sarah used her new revolutionary machine exactly three more times. For the last six months, it has been her unofficial clothes hanger.

What happened? Sarah thought she was buying a machine that would be very easy to operate and be a safe alternative to free-weights. Unfortunately, Sarah and many others are misguided by heavily marketed hype by machine developers. When it comes to effectiveness, particularly for the beginning exerciser, free-weights (i.e., dumbbells) rate much higher than expensive machines in terms of:

1. **Cost**. Three or four sets of dumbbells would have cost Sarah less than 10 times the amount she spent on her machine. As she gets stronger, she would have to buy more, though even a full set would not set her back nearly as much as the machine did.

2. **Space**. Dumbbells take up far less space than most of the exercise equipment sold on infomercials. You can easily place them in a closet, out of sight under the bed, or in a corner. There are even dumbbells you can adjust (i.e., PowerBlock) that allow you to adjust the poundage on one set, eliminating the need for single-poundage dumbbells.

3. **Variety**. Most machines are designed as one-dimensional. Even the most extensive multi-unit machines will allow exercisers to perform only a limited number of movements in a restricted range of motion. Free-weights can be used in ranges of motion based on the exerciser, not a machine. Use free weights along with benches or Swiss Balls and you have multitude of exercise options.

4. **Suitability**. Sarah couldn’t use her “multi-usage” machine for certain exercises because the machine was too big. This is not an uncommon problem. Even though most machines have adjustable seats, arm pads, and lever arms, there are limitations to their range and some may not fit the very small or very large person. However, if you can grab a dumbbell, you can use it.

5. **Functionality**. Exercising with free-weights increases the likelihood that the effects of the exercise will cross over into real-world situations. Think about it. How often during the day do you lie in a diagonal supine position and push weight up like you would on a machine leg press? Probably never. But how often are you required to do activities that are biomechanically identical to the squat? Sitting, getting in and out of a car, crouching down to pick something up…all the time! Properly using free weights will increase the functionality of an exercise to real-world situations.

6. **Safety.** It seems counterintuitive to consider free-weights as safer than machines. Most of us have heard (somewhere..) that we could get hurt with dumbbells and that machines were "safer." Maybe just the idea of someone doing a huge bench press lends itself to imagining the likelihood that one might lose control of the same amount of weight if they ever attempted it.

   Safety *during* exercise is more about proper form, technique, concentration and control rather than exercise apparatus. Someone can get hurt on a machine just as easily as with a dumbbell if incorrect form is used. As always, if you don't know how to do something, find someone (i.e., a reputable trainer) to show you how.

   Safety as a *result* of exercise is a long-term issue. It is not necessary for the body to stabilize itself or the weight during movements on most machines, because the weight apparatus is fixed. Key stabilizer muscles are then never given the chance to get stronger. Free-weights allow the exerciser to utilize core muscles and allow multi-plane movement that forces the exerciser to strengthen stabilizer musculature, which support joints. Over the long-term, free weights are superior to machines for building a stronger, more functional body.

   You don't need to spend a fortune on a piece of exercise equipment that you'll never end up using and won't suit your needs. A few sets of dumbbells are effective, intelligent alternatives to buying equipment, especially for those setting up their own in-home gym or workout area.

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Top The Pain When You Gain: Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness

Jon Gestl, CSCS

Nothing can be more frustrating than the pain and discomfort th at occurs in the days that follow a workout. The common muscle soreness and stiffness experienced one to two days after a workout may be so uncomfortable, particularly to the new exerciser, that it may discourage future workout attempts. As someone once s aid after her first workout, "What's the use of getting fit if I can't even get out of bed in the morning?"

Every exerciser, regardless of experience, deals with sore and stiff muscles following a particular workout. It is important to understand why thi s occurs and what to do about it in order to deal with this common, although irritating, phenomenon.

Why do I feel so much pain after a workout?

The typical muscle soreness experienced in the days following a workout is referred to as Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness (DOMS) and is characterized by stiffness, pain and sometimes weakness in the exercised muscles. The soreness can last several days after a workout, with the height of the pain occurring about 48 hours following the workout activity.

Studies report that DOMS is most likely the result of microscopic damage or tearing of muscle fibers with the amount of damage correlated to the intensity, amount, and kind of exercise that occurs. DOMS is also related to an individual's exercise history, and is most typical among those who are either starting out in an exercise program or those who change the intensity or type of exercise.

DOMS appears to be strongly affected by eccentric muscle actions. Commonly referred to as the "negative" part of an exercise, eccentric action occurs when a muscle resists while it is forced to lengthen. This action happens in movements such as descending stairs, downhill running, and landing a jump, or with the lowering movements in exercises such as squats, lunges or pushups.

Although there is no conclusive proof, researchers have suggested that DOMS may also be related to inflammation that occurs in and around a muscle. Swelling may occur following exercise, which increases pressure and causes discomfort.

But I can't get out of bed…How do I deal with this?

Although no surefire documented method exists to entirely get rid of DOMS, some treatments may temporarily alleviate some of the discomfort, such as application of ice, ultrasound and anti-inflammatory medication (aspirin, ibuprofen). Massage may also reduce some of the symptoms, but this method has not been proven.

As the saying goes, "time heals all wounds." DOMS usually dissipates within 3 to 7 days following exercise with no special treatment. Severe pain lasting longer than this time frame may indicate an acute injury and should be treated by a medical professional.

How can I prevent this from happening again?

There is no known technique or drug that entirely prevents DOMS. However, there may be some things you can do before you exercise to keep DOMS at a minimum. Popular fitness theory suggests warming up thoroughly then gently stretching both before and after exercise. Training with your limitations in mind is always a smart idea, building intensity over time rather than attempting an all-out effort on your first try.

The good news: The best prevention is regular exercise. Studies have demonstrated that continued training acts in a preventative fashion to reduce muscle soreness. Regular endurance training, specifically, has been shown to be a method of preventing the onset of DOMS.

The typical soreness experienced after training, or DOMS, is part of the process of getting stronger and reaching your fitness goals. The best method to reduce this somewhat frustrating part of starting or modifying a fitness program is none other than consistent effort.

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When the resolve is gone

New beginnings are so exciting! Caught up in the moment of a new resolve, the promise of a better life, the imaginings of a different you. A liberating aura emanates through the plans of leaving behind what isn't working and stepping out into the frontier of true change.

Thoughts of leaving your comfort zone conjure up a combination of fear and exhilaration. But the grandiose and valiant mental images begin to wane as the hard work of accomplishing that change becomes reality.

As much as we wish it weren't so, the fact is that goals seem to melt in the heat of real life. For true change to happen, we need to submit ourselves to very real and sometimes very painful new ways of doing things. The
biblical proverb (25:4) says "remove the dross from the silver, and out comes material for the silversmith". Silver, in order to evolve as the precious metal it is, needs to face the fiery furnace, in order to emerge free of copper, tin and iron. There is nothing wrong with these metals, but as long as they are part of the "ore" package, the silver is their prisoner. Without the heat of the fire, the precious silver could never be extracted. Michelangelo used to study pieces of unfinished marble, to see what form, or who, was struggling to get out of the rock. When he found jus the right piece of marble, he chiseled the new creation out of the crude stone. He set free the masterpiece within. This is how his famous sculpture "David" was born. Michelangelo never produced a masterpiece overnight. The statue of David was a "labor of love" slowly released and shaped through passionate determination and focused resolve.

Imagine for a moment that you are like the purest of silver, before it is mined. Or maybe you are a magnificent work of art, waiting to be released from your current self. Then imagine the refining and the sculpting. Thinking about being chiseled or refined by fire works well, intertwined with other daydreams on a lazy afternoon. But the going gets a little tougher when the cold March winds are blowing, and your January goal was to start a regular walking program, and your only exercise option is to go outside. Later for dinner, that take-out pizza is calling your name again. As you reach for the phone, you remember that lowering your cholesterol was another January goal.

Let the mind games begin! You start hearing those tapes: "I'll start tomorrow", "I'll start fresh after the weekend", "maybe I'm just not ready", "as soon as the kids go back to school", "as soon as the kids are off of school", or everybody's favorite: "What was I thinking, I will never change".

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If this is you, and the thrill of that new life is fading fast, don't quit yet! Try these three strategies to get you back and keep you on track

Show up for your exercise sessions. Play this tape in your mind, as you prepare: "My goal for today is five minutes. If I no longer feel like exercising, I don't have to." Then, if you truly want to end that session after five minutes, ok. Whether you work out for 5 or 45 minutes, you are closer to your goal than if you had not gone! The next day, you will be able to build upon that success.

Start treating food as your friend. We have been blessed by an abundant variety of pleasures for our taste buds. There are no good or bad foods. There are good and bad relationships with food. Many of us use food to meet needs other than hunger. Try keeping a log of what you eat, when, and how you feel at the time. If you suspect that your use of food is far beyond the need to fuel your body you may want to talk with a professional who can help you explore the root cause of overeating.

Get you priorities in order. We all have the same 24 hours at our disposal every day. The choice is ours as to how we use our time. This may be a new concept for you. Before you insist that you absolutely have no power to change the course of your day, try this. Make a "NO" list of what you have agreed to do that you do not want to do. Make a "YES" list of what you would like to do, but are not now doing. Weigh the consequences of substituting some activity on your NO list with one on your YES list. Consider the impact this could make on your life.

It takes somewhere between 90 and 180 days to develop a new habit. If you established the goals in January, you technically cannot say it didn't work until July! And that is only if you truly stayed on course!

The fact is, that something has to change, and that something is you. The six months that you dedicated to achieving your goals back in January, will go by whether you do anything different or not. Are your health and fitness goals no longer worthwhile? Has the passage of time devalued your desire to be more? Or has the immediate gratification of sleeping in and snuggling in your old comfort zone once again robbed you of a better future? True change requires time and determination. It requires the resolve that keeps you on track whether you feel like it or not.

You must decide for yourself. Are you content to stay the silver inside the ore? Are you content to remain only potentially healthier, happier, more energetic, or do you actually intend to operate outside your comfort zone, regardless of the cost to your immediate comfort, as you evolve into the person you know in your heart you can be?

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Top Train Smart: Aerobic conditioning is NOT a No-Brainer!

It doesn't matter if you just bought your first pair of walking or running shoes or your fiftieth pair. If you haven't mastered the art of successful aerobic exercise, you will sell yourself short of any real progress.

Balance is a good word to remember. You need a balance of hard sessions and easy sessions. One of the worst mistakes of new and old exercisers alike, is going too hard and too long. They wake up sore, their legs feel like dead weight, and the thought of having to endure another grueling effort brings on a sense of dread, instead of eager anticipation.

Let me tell you about my running group. I worked with five women ranging in age from 38 to 44. Only one of these women exercised regularly when we began. One of them had asthma, and one another type of exercised induced shortness of breath. We started training in May, with a goal of a popular 5-mile run in September. Each of them "ran the whole distance" and finished well. There were no injuries throughout the training phase and everyone felt good after the race. It was several months later, during a longer training run when the real value of smart training became apparent. The regular exerciser (I'll call her Jane, not her real name of course), had the fastest time at the race, and always ran hard. She did not follow the training guidelines, and regularly exceeded the recommended heart rate for running homework. She was also exhausted after every run. Jane also had other symptoms of "overtraining": she was tired, unmotivated, and was sick a lot. The rules for the training run of the day were to run 6 miles at 70% of maximum heart rate. The two with asthma ran slower than the two with no restrictions. But Jane ran the slowest. As a matter of fact, Jane had to walk in order to keep her heart rate within the parameters! What's my point? Jane should have been out in front, running easy, with little stress on her heart. By always requiring her body to work hard, it could not make the adaptations to become efficient. It also robbed her of the joy of running. She dropped out of the group. Two of those runners have to date, have completed two ½ marathons and felt great during and after the races. The only thing stopping them from a full marathon is the time they need to commit to the training. These two have learned that if you treat your body well and train it properly, it will usually come through for you. They both admit, that as long as they are able, they will probably be running. Neither of these women ever thought they could run at all!

What does it mean to train smart? It means to "meet your body where it is" and proceed gently until it you reach your goal. Gentle training includes lots of intense exercise, but also a lot of recovery. If your goal is walking around the block or running around the world, the training principles are the same.

The Workouts

LSD: Long Slow Distance walks or runs are easy and comfortable. These are usually 60 minutes or longer (gear them to your own level of fitness: if you currently walk or run 1 mile a day, this is fine, but if you currently run 5, you need to go a little longer). These sessions increase aerobic capacity, increase muscular and skeletal strength, and allow recovery from more strenuous workouts.

Intervals tease your body to a higher level of fitness. The session consists of a moderately challenging pace for 3 to 5 minutes followed by a 30 to 60 second blast of high intensity. If you normally walk 3mph, try jogging, and If you normally run 5mph, really run it hard. Follow this routine for 20 to 40 minutes. As your proficiency increases, decrease the moderate intervals and increase the hard ones.

Hill workouts build leg muscle strength and require a greater cardiovascular effort. Pick a hilly route or use the incline on the treadmill. They need to be a regular part of your workout week.

Speed work and lactate threshold runs are for the strong of heart!

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LT: Lactate threshold runs are the fastest possible pace you can maintain and still finish the workout (or the race). These are usually 20 to 25 minute runs, and are a must if you want to increase your speed. Once a month is good for most.

Speed drills are best done on the track, and are very short very intense runs. Once around the track is usually 400 meters (¼ mile). 4 sets of 800 meter (1/2 mile) sprints are good. Rest/recovery time is crucial between each set. Walk for a few minutes and then start again. Once a week is great, but once a month works too.

Every month, just to keep yourself honest, run or walk a route of 1 to 3 miles and record your time. If you use a heart rate monitor, your average heart rate will be a good indicator of your progress as well. Each month your heart rate should be lower and the walk/run easier.

The Plan

Use the hard/easy principle of training to stay injury-free. Every hard day (long runs, speed work, lactate runs, hill workouts) needs to be followed either by a day of REST or an easy session, at 60% of maximum effort or less.

REST days are just as important as training days. Build at least one, preferably two, into your training week.

If you only do LSD workouts, you will not make progress,
If you skip the LSD workouts, you will not make progress

The Timing

Program	*LSD	Interval	Tempo	Speed drills	Hill
Frequency	1/week	1/week	1/month	1/month	1/week
Duration	60 –90 min	30 min	3 miles	40-50 min	30 min
*RPE *Heart Rate	3 60% / 70%	3 / 7 70% / 85%+	4 - 5 70%-80%	7-9 90%	4-5-6-7 80%+

*Monitor the Intensity

Using a heart rate monitor: Work at the percentage of maximum heart rate listed. If you do not know your maximum rate, use the generic formula (220 – your age) and calculate the rate.

RPE (rating of perceived exertion) is an accurate indicator. Estimate how hard your body is working. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being minimal, and 10 being so hard you cannot continue.

NEVER start without warming up. Five to ten minutes of slow walking, jogging should do it. Consider this as an insurance policy against muscle soreness, injury, early burnout and poor performance.
More crucial than the warm up is the cool down. Take a good ten minutes of an easy pace to bring your body back to normal. Most cardiovascular events happen after exercise.

Don't forget to bring at least one water bottle to every workout. Dehydration is not a good atmosphere for training. Also remember to dress for the weather. Wear the least amount of clothing you can, so your body doesn't expend most of it's energy to cool you down. Bring something dry to change into after the workout.

****During exercise, if you experience any chest discomfort, shortness of breath, dizziness, leg pain, cramping or undue muscle soreness, nausea, vomiting, excessive sweating,

incoordination, or feel light-headed or unusually fatigued, STOP exercising and, if symptoms persist, alert your physician.****

My final advice is to plan your workouts and follow your plan. And don't be in such a hurry to achieve your goals. Enjoy the process, along with your body.

Top Rocking (Chair) Change

The first step to solving a problem, is to admit you have one. Alright, you admit it. You're stuck! You need to put a lot more effort into your training. You just aren't seeing the results you want. Or maybe, you don't train at all and need to get into a regular routine of aerobic and weight conditioning. You can recite 50 good reasons to get moving and absolutely none to stay the way you are. So get out there and get moving, right? Wrong!!!

Take time for a little "rocking chair" philosophy. People who sit in rocking chairs have got a lot of movement going on, but they aren't going anywhere! Or are they? Old people rock in chairs! Yes they do, and more young ones ought to try it as well. People consider their lives, their circumstances, what they do right, what they do wrong, should they change something or should they leave it alone? You can't think well in a crowded subway or stuck going 20 mph on the freeway in rush hour traffic. You also can't think well driving the car pool to soccer, gymnastics and dance. You really can't sort out why even the sound of words like "exercise", "speed drills", or "hard-core training" bring the same bodily response as fingernails on a chalkboard. And think about it, you must! Yes, admitting that the thought of working out longer or harder, or just plain exercising, sends shivers up your spine, is an excellent first step. So what are you going to do about it? If you take the advice of the experts in the science of changing behavior, you will stop, right where you are now, and Contemplate!

The thought of a routine fitness program may not be at all unpleasant to you. If, however, you are not now doing anything even close, you also need to "sit and rock" for a while. The work of James Prochaska has shown that people who rush into making changes before they are ready, will most often fail.

So, how do you know if you are ready to activate your new fitness plan or need to hang out and "rock for a while"? Take a minute – do these statements describe you? Do you know what you need to do, but have decided to wait until life settles down? Do you like to talk about the changes you are going to make "someday"? Are you convinced that one magic day, you will wake up, and somehow, all the circumstances in your life will be perfect and ready to finally make that change? Do you wish you were more fit? Do you ever dream about winning the lottery, but never buy a ticket? If you answered yes to any one of these questions, I suggest you get comfortable in that rocker, because you have some hard mental work to do. Figure out where you are, where you want to go, and why you are not there yet! Don't be fooled: this is not as simple a process as it sounds.

Here are some tips to make this a fruitful experience.

- Watch a movie that portrays what you would like to become. I especially enjoy the movie "Cool Runnings", about a ridiculous situation and a big dream. This true story about the Jamaican bobsled team continues to inspire me to reach my goals, and if you have never seen it, I highly recommend that you do.

- Visualize all the people you know who, in your mind, "have arrived". Imagine how their days might be different from yours. Go through a typical day in your mind, and imagine making alternate choices, and how that would feel. For example, you are driving home from work, and you decide to stop at the gym to work out. Or maybe you always stop at the gym: imagine that really tough workout. What will that mean to you? What does that mean to those who really do it? Dinner will be really late? You'll be too exhausted to eat dinner? No time to stop for groceries? A missed appointment? Is this impossible? How do others actually do this? This visualization is not meant to overwhelm you, but to clarify your current situation. Don't get discouraged. Get a perspective of your reality.

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- Fast-forward you life and visualize yourself five years from now. Visualize how you will look and feel if you continue exactly as you are. Think about the many choices you make each day. Think about your options. Think about what daily changes you could make. Think about how you will handle your emotions when frustration sets in.

- Start collecting data. Monitor yourself for a week and get some accurate baseline information. How often do you eat? How much do you eat? If you walk the dog, how far do you go? How long does it take you to walk a mile? How much of your time in the gym is actually spent working out?

- Make a list of all the activities and commitments that you feel keep you from getting adequate exercise. Do not list lack of time!!!!! Really think about what you are doing with your time, and what you need to rearrange. Everyone has 24 hours in their day. Many people exercise every day. Where do they get the time? Even people with small children can find time! People with high stress jobs absolutely need to make the time.

Get in position to move from rocking chair change to action change. Determine what it is that you want. Be realistic about where you are. Be realistic about what you need to change. Be realistic about what it is going to take to actually make that change. Make a decision.

Take some time to CONTEMPLATE. Pour yourself some lemonade, and "rock awhile". Make those changes in your mind. Get a good mental resolve going. The physical part is easy. Who was it that said "success is 10% perspiration and 90% determination"?

Top

Cancer by Obesity

The Big C ---coming soon to a (seriously overweight) body near you!

The reports keep coming in. And they get progressively scarier. We used to think that being overweight was a social stigma at best. We used to think that being overweight was not dangerous. Now, we think that being overweight could very possibly kill you! Now, our culture has become "fat-phobic".
But the more we talk about getting thin, the fatter we get.

The new prediction, if we continue in our current trends, is that by the year 2040, 100% of the American population will be obese. SELAH
[selah, in biblical terms,means pause, and calmly think that through].

Obesity is a breeding ground for disease. Regardless of where you live, you know the warning signs of oncoming storms. Here in Wisconsin, we call it "Storm Watch". Before a tornado, the air gets very heavy and still, it's usually very hot, with a cold front coming through, and the sky emits an eerie yellowish-grayish light. Does this mean a tornado will hit? No, but the conditions are perfect. So you check your supply of candles and flashlights and make sure you have food water and blankets in the safest part of your house, usually in the basement.
Just in case… Because you just never know.

Why do that (create harmful conditions that could lead to disaster) to your body?

For every extra pound of body fat you carry, you are creating a "Heart Disease Watch" by making your heart pump blood an extra ¾ mile. That's not per day, that's per minute. By carrying excess body fat, you are creating a "Diabetes Watch", because fat tissue is not good at pulling sugar out of the bloodstream. Your body needs that sugar for fuel. Heart Disease and Diabetes lead to untimely deaths.

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Worse than just the right conditions, is new research that states " after tobacco, obesity is emerging as the second most important cause of cancer, at least in Western populations". As your BMI (Body Mass Index[height to weight ratio]) goes up, so does your risk of cancer death.

Arthritis, although not a killer, is a sure bet. A real debilitator that will plague you without relief. Your joints were designed with your body frame in mind, and the further you stray from a healthy weight, the less able your joints are to support you.

And the Health risks are nothing compared to the cultural paranoia that obesity brings. The greatest fear of women, second only to breast cancer, is gaining weight. But why women buy into irrational ideals is an issue for another time.

Time Magazine, several years ago, looked at how the cultural ideal of Miss America keeps getting thinner. Based on the current recommended BMI (body mass index) of 18 to 28, the article noted that from 1940 to 2001, Miss America's BMI has dropped from a healthy 22 to below 17, and continues to fall.

One more negative. Research has found that obese people have medical bills up to $1,500 greater a year than others of normal weight, and the US Surgeon General estimated the economic cost of obesity in 2000 at $117 billion.

Obesity is Unhealthy Obesity is considered a Social Blunder Obesity costs a lot of money

The more we talk about the problem, the more stress we create for those who find themselves in the obesity predicament. The more stress we create for them, the less able they will be to lose the weight! Some researchers on the subject feel that if we could reduce stress levels for those who are overweight, we would see a definite decline in obesity. Food is seldom the issue. Food is the comforter, the boredom fighter, and the celebrator of major events. And it is always available, to handle internal or external stressors. If you believe you have a serious, uncontrollable issue with food, such as anorexia and bulimia, and do not know where to go for help, please email me and I will direct you to a qualified professional who can help.

What else can you do, besides reduce stress?
Basically eat less and move more.

- It has been found that you can stop weight gain by eating 3 bites less at EVERY meal, and take a DAILY 15 minute walk

- Exercise, exercise, exercise: an hour a day is your goal, burning about 300calories per session. You can do this in 15 –20 minute sessions, 3-4 times a day, burning 75 to 100 calories per session.

- Feed your body at least three times a day, preferably four to five times. Spread out the amount of food you normally eat during the day. Do not increase your calorie intake.

- If you eat Fast Food: STOP
  Portions are too big and too high in fat

- Prepare for the "blood sugar blues"
  4:30 pm is the average time that most people break their diets
  Eat lean protein and vegetables for lunch, then eat that again around 4:30

  If you wait until you are "ravenous " to eat, you will consume an average of 300 calories more, than if you have fueled your body throughout the day.

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- DO NOT go an a "diet". They don't work. Diets are someone else's idea of what you should eat. Your body is smart enough to know when it requires food, how much food it requires, and the types of foods it likes.

If diets worked, why do people keep regaining the weight they once lost, and then have to repeat the process all over again a year later?

If you feel trapped inside an overweight body, and want to get out, start by making small, but different choices everyday. You don't need to change your life right now, maybe you could just change lunch?

Top

ALL STRESSED UP AND NOWHERE TO GO

If you see a person about to drown, do you try and give him swimming lessons or do you throw him a life preserver? If you see a person spinning out of control due to unmanaged stress, do you enroll him/her in a Tai Chi class, or do you sit him/her in a chair and encourage a long, deep breath?

Long term stress relief requires practice. Developing a lifestyle of good nutrition and regular exercise keeps your body functioning at an optimal level, and is your best defense against stress. It's like learning how to swim, so that when the water is over your head, you won't drown.

If you are feeling stressed RIGHT NOW, here a few tactics to keep you afloat for the moment.

Deep Breathing
Sit still and take 3 deep, slow "belly" breaths. Empty your mind of any thoughts. Concentrate on the breath entering, expanding the belly, and exiting, flattening your belly. Feel the air going slowly in and out.

Time out
The minute you feel stressed, count to 10, very slowly, before you react

Body Scanning
Close your eyes and mentally "zero-in" on tense muscles. Get some blood flowing to that area. If your neck is tense, gently bring one ear at a time down to your shoulder. If your shoulders are tense, do slow shrugs. End up with a total body stretch.

Body check….
5 minutes of practice a day, and you will be able to "spot relax" any muscle groups that tend to attract stress
FACE: Open your face wide – wide eyes, wide jaw, feel the space between your ears expand—then scrunch it tight
CHEST AND BACK: Wrap your arms around yourself as if you were giving yourself a well-deserved hug. Walk your fingers toward your shoulder blades. Pull your shoulder blades as you curl forward, tightening the chest and stretching the back. Reverse the process by rolling your shoulders back, and attempting to squeeze your elbows together behind you.
ABDOMINALS: Sit up straight and inhale, lifting the rib cage. Exhale into a crunch, contracting the abs.
THIGH: Extend your leg and contract and release the front of the thigh.

Feeling better? These techniques are designed to help you through the moment, like a life preserver. A closer look at how you react to circumstances beyond your control, will lay the foundation of successful stress management.

What is this thing called stress, and why does your body react with such a fury? Your body strives to be in a perfect state of balance. It likes everything to always be the same. It likes your resting heart rate close to 60. It likes your blood pressure close to 120/80. It likes your temperature at exactly 98.6. Any circumstance that upsets this very small comfort margin creates what we call stress. If it gets cold, you need to shiver and if it gets warm, you need to sweat. If you need to run to catch a bus, your heart needs to beat faster, you have to

breathe harder and your muscles have to work harder. If you're shy, talking to a stranger will make you blush. Your body is so in tune with its environment, that the smallest variation in your routine will cause a reaction. Your body reacts to perceived danger. Your body was amazingly designed to help you when your emotional state is upset. This is called the fight or flight response. Your muscles tighten, your breathing becomes shallow and fast. Your heart beats faster. Your blood pressure goes up. You perspire. Your digestion stops. Your focus is zeroed in to the problem. Your body expects you to do something! It does not know the difference between physical and emotional stress. Your child runs into the street in rush hour traffic. Your sales quota has just been raised and the lowest performer is out the door. Your mother in law announces she is coming for a month's visit. The neighbor's dog has decided to have you for dinner. You body will always react to your perception of the danger involved in any circumstance. You are supposed to either fight the danger or run away from it. The choice is completely yours.

Most of us do not anticipate physical danger in our daily lives. What we do anticipate is getting up on time in the morning, getting the kids off to school, getting to work on time, meeting our deadlines, having lunch, getting home at a reasonable hour, eating dinner, walking the dog, and enjoying quality time with our children. What could possibly go wrong? And there lies the potential for unmanaged stress! Situations beyond your control: those unexpected twists to your day are a normal part of living. There was no cereal for breakfast and your son missed his bus. The dog crashes through the screen door after a stray cat, and you absolutely cannot be late for that meeting! Whether a situation is perceived as very good or very bad, demands are placed on your body and emotional stamina. How your brain processes what's going on dictates how your body will react. The greater the challenges and the more frequent, the harder your body has to work to stay in balance. Changing your world is unrealistic. The only power you have is to change how you perceive and react. You are entirely responsible for your reactions to the world around you.

Research has shown that the chronic stressors are the real villains. There is a saying "the little foxes spoil the vine", and this is true about unmanaged stress and your health. Health experts agree that 85% of illness is the direct result of unmanaged stress. It's how we are able process and react to the day to day "micro-traumas" that determines our health. Angry and hostile reactions take the number one spot as indicators of possible heart attack and stroke.

So what can you do to help your body maintain it's delicate balance in spite of your chaotic world? Fortunately you can do a lot! Finding ways to reduce your stressors may be your first inclination. Daily demands of your time and energy, that you are unwilling to give into, are usually not in your control. You can only control your perception and your reaction.

- Identify and then change the way you see your stressors.
- Learn to say "NO".
- Surround yourself with positive people.
- Laugh, especially at yourself.
- Eat properly: limit sugar, fat, salt, caffeine and alcohol.
- Rest: go to bed early, take a nap if possible.
- Exercise, exercise, exercise.

There are physiological as well as emotional benefits of each component listed. Consider each behavior as a preventive measure, to keep your body in balance. They are your life's swimming lessons. Each of these behaviors requires a good deal of self-reflection and a sound plan in order to integrate them into your current lifestyle. Start with regular exercise: you will sleep better and clean some of the cobwebs from your brain. Once you have that working for you, explore some of the other measures. Living a stress-free life is impossible, but living a calm life amid the stressors is achievable. Taking critical care of yourself is your only line of defense. Be good to yourself and determine what is really important to you. If your focus stays on what is important, the daily irritations will start to lose their significance.

Most people take better care of their cars than they do themselves. It really is all about preventive maintenance. Several years ago, about 35 miles from home, on the expressway, my jeep started jerking and clanging "for no apparent reason". I had to have it towed, and I lost a couple of hours of time that I did not have. Turns out that I had ignored the need for an oil change. That lack of care cost me over $1,000 and a lot of unnecessary grief.

Your body is a lot like that jeep. Take care of it. When the stressors of life are over you head, you'll be able to swim.

Top

I want to lose weight: is cardiovascular or strength training better?

Yes! Both are equally important!
In order to keep unwanted pounds off, you need to incorporate both types of exercise. The old adage of "you are what you eat" is largely true. However, research has shown that over a year's time, only those people who built regular exercise into their lives actually kept the weight off.

Aerobic activity is any movement using large muscles in a rhythmic pattern lasting for longer than 2minutes such as; running, swimming, biking, walking, etc. Aerobic exercise eats up triglycerides, a blood fat . Aerobic exercise also is excellent for building up the cardiovascular system, and critical in the prevention of heart disease. The word aerobic means "with air". In order for your body to be working aerobically, your muscles need to be utilizing the oxygen from every breath you take. The amount of air you breathe doesn't determine your aerobic capacity. What determines your aerobic capacity is the ability of your muscles to pull oxygen out of your blood stream. The majority of the air you breathe in comes right back out unused. Your muscles can only learn to increase the amount of oxygen that they are able to grab by being constantly exposed to that oxygen while they are working. This means you need to be breathing not gasping for air while exercising. This type of training correlates to 60 - 80% of your heart rate maximum. When you reach this state of regular, controlled and steady breathing and your heart rate stabilizes, it is called "steady state". As long as your muscles are able to utilize oxygen at this rate, you will continue to move and your body will use fat as fuel.

There is a point in every workout, if you continue long enough, where your breathing rate increases exponentially and your heart rate increases dramatically. This is usually also the point where lactic acid builds up. Beyond this point your muscles must revert to an alternate fuel source to continue working. This point is called your "aerobic threshold". After you reach this point, you are working an aerobically, which means "without air". At this point the body is no longer using fat as its preferred fuel. Because the muscle is unable to process the oxygen, or respiration cannot keep up with the workload, the body looks for an alternate fuel source: muscle sugar. There is a certain amount of sugar (glycogen) stored within muscles. Muscle glycogen is quickly depleted. Your body is able to move only for a few more minutes without added fuel. In long distance runners the term "hitting the wall" describes this lack of a fuel source. This is the time where power gels and carbohydrate supplementation come into play, but this is beyond the current scope.

The point at which the aerobic threshold occurs depends on your aerobic capacity, but is usually at 85% of your maximum heart rate
Anaerobic activity is high powered, rapid activity lasting less than two minutes such as; high intensity jump rope, weight lifting, sprinting, ect… Anaerobic exercise develops muscle and muscle requires a lot of fuel!

Anaerobic means "without air". In order for your body to work anaerobically, your muscles need to use stored sources of fuel. These sources are in the liver and in the muscle itself. Stored muscle glycogen is mainly for "emergency use": there is only a limited supply.
The anaerobic system responds to stimulus overload. When the muscle is forced to perform more work than it is used to, muscle tissue breaks down, causing microscopic tears. Debris is left in the blood stream and the supply of stored muscle glycogen is depleted, causing fatigue. It takes 12 to 24 hours after the exercise for the muscle to repair itself, and ready itself for the next "onslaught" This recovery period is critical to building muscle. Muscle soreness one to two days after an intense exercise bout is common, and is believed to happen because of the breaking-down and rebuilding process. There is no remedy for (DOMS) Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness. This soreness will not get worse or better by anything you do, and should not stop you from normal activities. Soreness is not normally a regular occurrence.

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Resistance training overloads the muscle. Muscle responds to overload by growth. The larger the muscle mass, the more calories you will burn sitting still! Muscle is your fat burning furnace. Muscle requires an abundance of calories to exist. Fat requires very few. Every ten years over the age of thirty, your body loses about 10% of its muscle mass. That is why, as you get older, you will gain weight without any change to your eating plan. This is why everyone over the age of thirty needs to lift weights.

You need to work both the aerobic and the anaerobic systems independently. Fuel for exercise changes as your intensity increases. Fuel sources are als o different for resistance training and cardio -vascular training. There are different muscle fibers responsible for the cardiovascular and ***the strength systems, and the stimulus required to challenge them are very different.***

Don't sell yourself short with only half a workout. The more muscle you have, the more calories you will burn. The more cardio you do, the more fat you will burn, the healthier your heart and lungs will be, and the cleaner your arteries will be.

Combine these principles with a whole, unprocessed diet, and you will be set for life. Your weight will normalize, and you will be, (physically anyway) the best you can be.

Meet Karin Peterson

Your Wellcoach

www.wellcoaches.com/karin.peterson wellcoach@wi.rr.com

I am a reformed Couch Potato, and am passionate about my mission to get people moving! I became passionate about exercise, and the positive changes that took place in my life when I was 30-something. I want to help others, who are somehow "stuck" in their lives, realize the exuberant wellness that comes from getting active and fueling your body with whole foods.

Lifestyle behaviors contribute to 50% of everyone's health status. I believe the majority of us have control over what we eat and how much we move. Behavior change is what I focus on. Using the well-researched model of the stages of change, first introduced by the renowned James Prochaska. I work with my clients to establish where they are now, and where they want to go. Together we analyze goals to make sure they are obtainable. The client then agrees to objective, "do-able" weekly steps in areas such as stress management, exercise, and nutrition. At each weekly telephone meeting, we determine the percentage of goals met, discuss what went right and what did not work. We are able to actually measure weekly progress. The client receives a private web site from which we work. I will work with anyone who truly wants to improve.

My degree is from The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. I graduated, Suma-Cum-Laude as a Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology, specializing in exercise physiology. I am certified by industry leaders, including The American College of Sports Medicine and The American Senior Fitness Association. I am recognized as an Elite Trainer through IDEA, an international fitness organization dedicated to continuing education and professional development. My expertise comes from a wide range of health and fitness settings including personal training, cardiac rehabilitation, group exercise and fitness consulting. I present seminars in both corporate and private settings. I am a regular contributor to the www.AtoZFitness.com Newsletter. Staying on top of current research is a must, as is continuing education in all facets of wellness.

I am a member of a national lobbyist group named Researchers against Inactivity–related Diseases (RID). Research has identified a broad range of chronic health conditions directly related to inactive lifestyles. RID's mission is to work with funding agencies and policy makers to make the public aware of the dangers of inactivity. A sedentary lifestyle is just as dangerous as smoking!

Inactivity is a pervasive silent killer. My personal mission is to get people moving: not only to improve their lives, but possibly to save them.

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Master Your Metabolism

Metabolism is simply the speed at which your body burns calories. The faster your metabolism - the quicker you will lose weight. Some people have a slower metabolism, and therefore tend to put on weight or find it difficult to lose weight. The good news is that you can **speed up** your metabolism and help your body lose weight more efficiently. Master your metabolism and you'll master your weight for life!

What Slows Down Your Metabolism?

Lack of exercise or activity by not exercising, your body will contain more fat and less muscle. Lack of muscle tone will slow the metabolism down.

Skipping Meals When you skip meals, such as breakfast, your body is deprived of energy to function, and therefore it slows down to conserve energy.

Very Low -Calorie Diets If your body isn't getting enough food for energy, it simply won't have the energy to burn calories.

Starving Y ourself When your body doesn't get any food at all, it protects itself by slowing down your metabolism . and *stopping* you from losing weight.

Alcohol Although alcohol is fine in moderation, it does tend to make the body slow and sluggish, so on a weight-loss point of view, alcohol is best kept to a minimum or cut out completely.

What Speeds Up Your Metabolism?

Aerobic Exercise After a session of aerobics, swimming or walking, your body continues to burn calories for hours afterwards.

Body Conditi oning (with weights) The more muscles you have - the higher your metabolism will be - even at rest.

Food (believe it or not) Eating plenty of low-fat good, balanced food, especially carbohydrates such as fruit, vegetables, bread, pasta and rice actually gives the body more energy to burn calories *and* lose weight.

Smaller, regular meals - throughout the day inject a constant stream of energy rather than larger meals which overload the system, making you feel more sluggish and lethargic.

Does my metabolism slow down as I get older?

Surprisingly enough, your metabolism has got more to do with your lifestyle than your age. Your metabolism is determined by how much you eat, how active you are and how much muscle tone you have. As we get older we do tend to exercise less and eat more, but this is to do more with a lifestyle choice than metabolism. Your metabolism can be slowed down or speeded up at ANY age.

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Lose Weight Faster With Circuit Training

As a personal fitness trainer, it is my job to produce results!! One excellent results-producing training method I swear by is CIRCUIT TRAINING. If you've ever been to a circuit training class, you'll know the set-up! Basically, you have 8-12 exercise 'stations' or areas - and you go from one to the next, for 1-2 minutes each exercise.

Circuit training is a fantastic all-round body conditioner which helps you lose weight faster by turning more of your muscles into 24-hour fat-burning machines and because circuit training requires you to use more muscles - you get maximum results in minimal time.
You are also less prone to overuse injuries that sometimes occur from doing the same exercise movements repeatedly. Circuit training also provides variety which means if your exercise sessions are less monotonous, you are much more likely to exercise more often - and for longer periods of time.

The best all-round circuit is the one that incorporates an aerobic exercise, then a body conditioning exercise, alternatively for 1 minute at a time. You can make up your own circuit, involving your favourite exercises for different muscle groups. You don't have to be super-fit to do circuit-training - you can modify it to suit your own fitness level.

If you workout in a gym and are bored with your current programme, try selecting the exercises you enjoy the most and alternate them, one minute for each exercise. Simply go from one to the next with very little time between them, and when you're finished - do the whole thing again!

The good thing about circuit training is that you don't need a lot of space or equipment - just a little imagination. So if you haven't got any equipment at home, you can use exercises such as jogging on the spot, running up and down the stairs or skipping (without the rope) and interspace them with squats, lunges, triceps dips, abdominal crunches and press-ups.

Give circuit-training a go today - and watch your body transform fast!!

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Are you losing weight for YOU - or for others?

Losing weight is hard enough but it's even more difficult when you feel you *have* to, or *should* lose weight because your doctor, partner or family relative puts pressure on you. Other people pressurizing you to lose weight is a de-motivator!! The more you feel you *have* to do something - the less likely you will feel like doing it at all!

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Granted, certain people may only have your interests at heart, but do they? Don't forget this is still *your* life, *your* body and *your* mind. Other peoples 'expert' opinion on your weight problem is only going to drive you towards your comfort foods even more, making you feel worse. Unless it is positive, constructive advice, ignore other people - they are not helping you! Other people's opinion and advice is worth exactly what you pay for it ... nothing!!!!

Make a list of reasons why YOU want to lose weight. Here are a few to start you off: *Do you want to:*

Look better in clothes? ... Looking well in your clothes is definitely a great incentive for losing weight. Not only will your old clothes fit - you'll have more of a choice and won't be restricted to wearing baggy T-shirts and sweaters.

Feel healthier? ... Losing weight will have an amazing effect on your short-term and long-term health. Short-term ailments such as lower back pain, breathlessness, sore muscles or joints will magically ease or disappear altogether. Little things like playing with the kids, running up the stairs and just getting through the day, won't feel like such a chore. Long term health benefits are obvious. Losing body fat will prevent heart disease and strokes - and will save your LIFE! And that's worth losing weight for!

Feel more confident? ... Losing weight will have your confidence absolutely soaring. You will walk that bit taller, look people in the eye, instead of cowering away because of how awful you feel about yourself. You will feel fantastic because you will look fantastic - and this will come across to others. Once you feel more positive about your life - more positive things come into your life!

Improve your career/job prospects? … Losing weight will certainly give you that extra confidence to go for what you want in your career or job. Feeling fitter and looking amazing will do wonders for your performance and efficiency at work, and therefore increase your chances of promotion. *Don't let 'other people's' **unqualified** opinion or advice influence your decisions. At the end of the day, you owe it to yourself (no -one else!) to eat better and get more active so that you feel AND l ook better. Do it for you - in your own time!!*

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Quit Smoking And Lose Weight

If one of your New Year's Resolutions is to give up smoking, but are worried about putting on weight, this information could help you. The reason people gain weight is because the nicotine in cigarettes speeds up your metabolism and keeps your weight down. When you give up smoking your metabolism slows down - and that's why you gain weight. However, if you get more active and change your eating habits BEFORE you quit smoking, you should reduce your chances of gaining weight.

Becoming More Active. Becoming physically active is the best way to blast your metabolism and control your weight. Regular exercise will also increase your energy, improve your health, and may relieve the stress due to the lack of nicotine in your body. Try to do at least 30 minutes of exercise a day. It can be done in short spurts ... 10 minutes here, 20 minute there - it all adds up! Spend less time watching television, using the car and sitting at a computer screen. Simple ways to become more physically active include brisk walking, cycling, swimming, going to the gym and putting more effort into your daily routine.

Improve Your Eating Habits - Gradually. Changing your eating habits too quickly can add to the stress you may already feel as you try to quit smoking. Eating a variety of foods is a good way to improve your health. Eat plenty of grain products, vegetables, and fruits. Choose low-fat foods and low-calorie

beverages, low-fat dairy products, lean meats, fish and poultry. Reduce foods high in fat and sugars and low in nutrients.

Support. You may also want to talk to your doctor about prescription medications that are available to help you quit smoking. Try not to panic about modest weight gain - it is only temporary**.** Accept some weight gain as a normal result of the nicotine leaving your body. Know that quitting smoking is the best thing that you can do for you and those around you.
At the end of the day, the health risks of smoking are far greater than the risks of gaining 5 to 10 pounds. Cigarettes may keep your weight down - but they do not keep you healthy. Your body will soon adjust itself again but the most important thing is that you will become healthier, fitter and probably live longer ... and that's worth giving up for!!

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Too Busy To Get Fit?

A hectic job, traveling frequently, a busy schedule can all play havoc with your fitness regime. No time to exercise ... a quick (unhealthy) bite here and there as you rush off to a client, meeting or to pick up kids. It's not easy to juggle a busy lifestyle as well as trying to eat right and fit in time to exercise - so here are a few ideas to help you cope better with your busy lifestyle AND lose weight in the process.

Get your priorities in order!

Your kids, house, partner, and work are important - but so are **YOU!** Think about this: if you were just that bit fitter and healthier, think how much MORE you could cram into a day - and quicker too!

Incorporate activity into your day

Instead of completely changing your busy lifestyle, INCORPORATE more activity into your day, such as walking brisker, using the stairs more, using the car less, clenching your buttocks tightly when you sit, and pulling your tummy in when you stand. Do what you normally do - but put more effort into it!!

Make time to exercise

Don't feel that you have to set aside an hours' session every day to lose weight. Even 10-minute sessions throughout the week (even at lunchtime) could make all the difference. It may not sound like a lot, but even if it is only 10 minutes ... it's 10 times better than doing nothing - and it'll still be enough to give your energy levels a great boost, helping you work better in the long run.

Hire A Personal Fitness Trainer

The perfect solution for those who genuinely lack the time to exercise. A personal trainer can work around YOUR times and requirements, and can come to you wherever you are, at home, office or wherever is most convenient. Personal trainers vary in price, so shop around and ask about special discounts for multiple sessions.

Eat Breakfast

Breakfast is vital, as is any other meal of the day, simply because it kick starts the metabolism and gives you energy to get through that first part of the day. Your daily fix of caffeine-filled coffee is simply not enough!! Breakfast time is simply any time before lunchtime, so if you can't face breakfast first thing in the morning, make sure you eat at least an hour or two afterwards.

Eat little and often

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It's not when you eat that matters - it's **what** you eat! Wherever you are, in the car or at your desk, make sure you have **healthy snacks** handy for whenever you feel yourself craving. By eating little, often AND healthily, you will keep your energy levels high, and be able to function better in your job. You CANNOT be at your best if you are constantly drained because of lack of fuel, i.e. FOOD. Avoid always heading for the biscuits or chocolate bars and instead eat low-fat filling foods, such as low-fat sandwiches, bananas, cereal, dried fruit, rice cakes, yoghurts, breadsticks, bagels, popcorn, etc.

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The 5 Worst Diet Gimmicks

How many weight loss ‘solutions’ have you tried without success? You don't have to be Sherlock Holmes to detect diet scams. All you need is a little common sense and my elementary tips for digging through the false promises. If you have tried everything from high protein diets to slimming pills, then read on…

High Protein Diets
Any diet that promotes bacon and eggs and virtually no fruit has literally got to be a recipe for disaster. Yes, you will get rid of the hunger pangs – and yes, you will even lose weight – but the damaged kidneys and potential heart attacks in the process, wouldn’t be worth it!

Slimming drinks/foods
What you have to ask yourself is not whether the product works or not - but for how long you can stick with it. Any reduction in calories will make you lose weight, and if you can actually stick to any of these products for long enough, the weight will stay off. But as with most methods of weight loss, you will have found these foods/drinks difficult to stick to. The money you spend on these products could be spent on good quality food that would actually make a difference.

Ab-tightening belts. For around $50, you too can enjoy the sensation of wearing a silly vibrating belt, supposedly replacing fat with muscle. I guarantee you will feel lighter … $50 lighter!!

Slimming pills
Whether they suppressed your appetite, increased your metabolism or supposedly burned fat from your food, I can bet when you stopped using them the weight piled on more than before. They are a short term solution with short term results.

Slimming treatments
Slimming wraps, slimming patches, colonics - whichever treatment you tried at the health farm or spa will have helped you lose a little weight (mostly water) - for about a week, or less - and for a small fortune! Granted, these treatments may make you feel good at the time, but they are NOT the long-term answer to your weight problem.

These are only a few of the many gimmicks that are being promoted every day, knowing that there are people out there that will do ANYTHING to lose weight. Don’t be one of them! Eat less fat, move more - and don't waste your money on these ‘magic cures’. There’s no such thing!

Marina Bradford is from Newtownards in Northern Ireland and has been in the fitness industry for 13 years as a personal fitness trainer and weight loss/fitness consultant. She also teaches various styles of fitness class, such as aerobics, step, circuits, weight training and Tae-bo. Once a week she writes a fitness column called PEAK FORM for "The Newsletter" which is one of Northern Ireland's biggest newspaper publications. She also has a web site http://www.weighless.co.uk where more of her articles can be viewed under Weighless News.

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Super Health – Crucial to Athletes/What About Genetics?

Let me introduce myself. My name is Paul Davies. I am a currently a pastor at a little church in Australia. I am also a naturopath with 17years clinical experience. In Australia that means I have had extensive training in the fields of anatomy, physiology, pathology, biochemistry, nutrition, and herbal medicine (among other things!).

And I have a long history of involvement in sports, mainly in karate and marathon kayak paddling. I have also pumped a lot of iron over the years, as a foundation to maximizing my performance in those sports. Over time I would like to share with you what I have learned about health. Why? Because superb health is crucial for all athletes. That applies to endurance athletes, strength and power athletes, and body builders.

Whatever your athletic pursuit, you want to get the most out of training, don't you? You put a lot of effort into making sure you train with the appropriate overload to stimulate muscle growth, or greater endurance, or greater strength and power, don't you?

Well if you want to capitalize on the effort you put into training, what you need to do is to make sure your body is a well-tuned and well-balanced bio-machine. What you *don't* want is your efforts in the gym or on the track or in the pool wasted because your body is unable to respond to the training stimulus!

I know that for me, understanding my body and trying to get the edge in training has been a life-long passion. I want to help you, so I wish to share what I have learned about achieving super health. If you can achieve that, and if you train appropriately, you will attain your maximum athletic potential, only limited by your genetic make up.

What About Genetics ?

Scientists once thought that when we finally mapped the human genetic pattern we would "understand it all". But that hasn't happened. The reason for that is that there was an assumption about how the genes operated that turned out to be false. It was expected that one gene or combination of genes would be the blueprint for just one structure. It was therefore expected that the number of genes each human being carried would be huge. But that is not so. The number of human genes is much lower than was expected; so low that there couldn't be enough genes to determine everything that exists in the human body, unless the way they work is entirely different to the original proposition. And it *is* entirely different.

What we have in our genetic structure is a kind of "alphabet" from which words and sentences and stories are constructed. Admittedly it is a very *large* alphabet. We have about 3 billion genetic "letters" that make up a vocabulary of between 30,000 and 40,000 genes. Each gene may be involved in a myriad of programming functions in our body and may be thought of as a word that can be combined with other words to create the sentences, paragraphs and chapters of the book that is our story. That means that how any person turns out is not completely predictable. From one perspective we are writing our own story, and what is happening in the current chapter is dependent on the interaction between our genetic structure, the environment and our choices over our lifetime. What does that mean?

It means that our story can be changed. With the same alphabet of twenty-six letters millions and millions of books have been written. And similarly with the same alphabet that has created the vocabulary of our genetic structure we can write a variety of different stories. We have a little more control over both our health and our athletic potential and performance than we have realized.

It is true some things are genetically fixed. We have no control over the sequences of genes within the DNA with which we were born. But *not everything is* ***fixed***. Exactly which words of our genetic sequence are chosen, the particular genes that are switched on or off, to be used or not used in the words of our story *is partly determined by environmental factors* . And I am not merely talking about nutrition.

Now it is certainly true that we have no control over some aspects of our environment. But there are many of those factors over which we can choose to take mastery. We can choose to eat differently. We can choose to exercise or to not exercise. We can choose to get upset when the traffic is congested or to put on a relaxing CD and enjoy the slower more relaxed pace. We can choose to develop attitudes that lead to peace and contentment and which enhance our relationships and the ability of our bodies to respond to training, or to live with attitudes that lead to unnecessary stress and anxiety and which change the hormone balance and produce low level health and sub-standard athletic prowess.

We have a great many choices. The genes that are switched on or switched off are largely determined by the choices we make in the physical, social, psychological and spiritual areas of life. So our life story in the arenas of health and fitness is a little more open ended than we would like to believe.

Of course, some genetic patterns bring with them difficulties that no change in the environment will fix. If you are five feet tall and have a build so skinny that you look like matchsticks with the wood scraped off, you are unlikely to ever be as muscular as Arnold Schwarzenegger! But the fact is, most of us don't inhabit that extreme end of the gene pool, and I have seen so many people recover from health problems that they have been told by doctors are "irreversible" or "terminal" or "uncontrollable due to genetic make up", that I now believe that almost anything can and does happen in the arena of health and fitness, including the "impossible".

So over time I want to write about the various factors that impact on health, both positively and negatively. I want to help you achieve your maximum genetic health potential, and therefore your maximum genetic athletic potential.

As living beings we are a kind of mini-*ecosystem* of interactive parts consisting of the physical, the mental and the spiritual. And we cannot separate them. Damage in one area invariably leads to disruption of the whole. As an example, nutritional deficiency at the physical level most definitely affects the mind since many nutrients are involved in proper firing of nerve cells in the brain. Both thought patterns and attitudes would change towards the negative. As another example since exercise dissipates adrenalin, if adequate exercise is absent the hormone balance shifts in a way that negatively impacts on physical health. And if the spirit is not at peace underlying attitudes will direct thinking in negative directions, and that will be followed by negative emotions so once again the altered hormone profile will damage the physical body.

The mind, the body and the spirit must *all* be healthy if the optimum health that is foundational to fitness is desired. As living beings we cannot escape the fact that we are an integrated whole. We are *not* a grab-bag of bits and pieces that can be dealt with as discrete and separate entities. So a balanced approach to the development of health (and it *is* an *active* rather than a *passive* state) needs to address *all* of these areas. And if they are all to be addressed we need to understand them.

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And before we go any further please don't think that I speak from a purely theoretical point of view. I have had my own struggles to overcome: peptic ulcer, high blood pressure, arthritis, predisposition to injury when training, among other things. *But I have overcome it all* .

I want to arm you with the weapon of knowledge that is essential if you are to be able to make informed choices in the arena of health and fitness. So over time I will progressively write articles covering the following areas.

1. Firstly, how your body functions. It is a cooperation of interdependent systems.

2. Secondly, nutrition for super health. That will be divided into two parts.

The first will cover the components of nutrition, both the macronutrients and micronutrients. I will examine the sorts of things known about nutrition, but more importantly discuss the limitations of both our knowledge and of the scientific method of investigation into factors that contribute to good nutrition. I will give a brief overview of the known essentials, the known toxins and other less essential but nevertheless extremely valuable food components.

The second will cover food as the primary component of good nutrition and a keystone in building health. If you have a more holistic overview of nutrition, you can make more informed judgments as to the likely benefits of supplements you may be considering.

3. Thirdly, the impact of stress on health and various stress management strategies. I will define stress and talk about what can and can't be done about it.

I want to give you a framework to think and work within that will help you make informed choices about diet, supplements and other things that impact your health and your fitness, even if to date you have had no formal training in any of these areas. I hope I am able to bless you! Paul Davies.

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About the Body – Part 1 (The Fundamental Unit of the Body)

Paul Davies

To help you make more informed decisions about your health, and remember that super health underlies super fitness, over the next few weeks I want to lead you on an information journey. It will be a journey that helps you develop a more *holistic* view of how your own body works. If you understand that, you will actually be better able to use the science that you know as a tool (whatever your level of knowledge!), instead of being confined by it's rather narrow perspective. You will more clearly see through the fads to the facts. And that will means *you* are more in control of your bank balance! For today, let's take a look at the fundamental structural unit of the body: in other words, the cell.

The human body is made of cells. So to understand how the body works, we need to start with cells. Every cell, plant or animal, has a number of common factors. It divides itself off from other cells with a membrane. Internally is contained all of the apparatus for the cell to produce energy (*mitochondria*), to manufacture the chemicals it needs (RNA, messenger RNA, enzymes et al things), and to reproduce (DNA & RNA). There are many other biochemical molecules within cells that are used by each cell to maintain itself. Inside the cell is a system of tubes that act as a highway system, along which things can be moved from one part of the cell to another as needed. This system is called the *cytoplasmic reticulum* . Each cell has the capacity both to take in what it needs for its own nutrition, and to push the waste products that arise from its own metabolic processes out into the external environment.

The nutrients and waste products that are moving in and out of the cell must pass through the membrane of the cell, which is *semi-permeable* . That means that the membrane will let some things (but not others) into the cell (at the discretion of the cell), and it also means that it will allow some things (but not others) to be pushed out of the cell through the membrane into the external environment (also at the discretion of the cell).

The external environment needs to be watery in nature and able to provide the building blocks that the cell needs (nutrients, substrate), and it needs to be clean enough that the cell is not overwhelmed with pollution, and so that the cell has little difficulty excreting its own waste products.

Everything that happens in the body depends on the optimum function of each and every cell. In fact the body can be thought of as a complex cooperative system of cells all of which depend on each other for life to be sustained. Keep that in mind as we build up this picture.

Next week we will look at the three key tasks the body *must* carry out to ensure the long-term survival and optimum functioning of *all* of its component parts to ensure. That includes all of those cells involved in producing athletic performance.

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Top Super Health – About the Body – Part 2 (The Body: A System of Systems.)

The Body As A Whole

To help you make more informed decisions about your health, and remember that super health underlies super fitness, I am doing a series of articles on how the body works from the holistic viewpoint. Last week we took a look at the fundamental structural unit of the body, which is the cell. This week we will take an overview of the body as a whole. The human body can be thought of as a complex cooperative system of cells, all of which depend on each other for life to be sustained.

In one sense the body is a *bag of cells*, the skin being the bag that carries the salty watery external environment in which the cells live and from which they extract the essentials they need for life to continue. (Sorry ladies, you may be a young bag now, but barring accident at some time in the future you will definitely be an old bag!)
This salty and watery environment that is part of the body, but outside each of the individual cells is called either the *extracellular fluid* or the *lymph* or the *interstitial fluid* (the latter term has fallen into disuse). The internal environment of the cells, which is once again salty water, is called the *intracellular fluid*.

Although both environments are salty in nature, they are different in a number of ways, one of the key ones being that the fluid *inside* the cell has more potassium and magnesium salts, with less calcium and sodium salts, whereas in the *outside* environment it is the other way around.

Now the external environment of the cells, the extracellular fluid or lymph, which is contained in the bag of skin, still needs to be able to provide all of the things that a normal salty watery environment would provide to a single cell that is floating in the ocean. And from the point of view of that cell, the ocean is semi-infinite in size and almost infinitely able to supply the needs of that single cell. For example, the ocean will not become polluted by the waste products of that single cell, and the availability of nutrients is almost endless.

The Body As A Synthesis Of Interdependent Systems
But unlike a single cell floating in the ocean, the human body does not have a semi-infinite supply of that salty watery extracellular fluid. It has a definitely limited supply of it, and since there are cells living in it, it needs to remain able to accept waste products without becoming polluted and also to be able to provide for the nutritional needs of each cell by bringing the nutrients in from the outside. So God has organised the body into a series of *interdependent systems* that are ultimately designed to do three main things.

1. Protect that all-important environment from being polluted. It needs to be kept absolutely clean. If you put rubbish into your body, you will pollute the "external" environment of your own cells. How can you expect the greatest adaptation to the overload of training if you do that?

2. Keep topping up the extracellular fluid or lymph with nutrient supplies for the cells. If you don't put into your body what the cells need, how can you expect them to adapt to the overload of training?

3. Remove foreign invaders (both biological and chemical) that may be a threat to the survival of the cells. If you don't look after your health, if you are not aiming at *super health* , illness will interrupt training and delay the achievement of your long-term goals!

Within each main system of the body, there are specialised organs, made of *specialised* cells, which are grouped into different sorts of tissues within the organs. So the cells are not all the same. At conception there is only one cell, which divides again and again, and early on in the process all of the cells are the same.

But ultimately they become specialised 1[1] in a way that makes them capable of performing certain tasks necessary for the survival of all of the body very well, but in specialising in this way, they become incapable of performing certain other functions at all, and so they must rely on other specialised cells to help them out. Hence the need for the cells to be organised in a systematic way.

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The History of Nutrition.

Introduction to Nutrition

This week begins a fairly lengthy series of articles on the fundamentals of nutrition. Let me declare my position at the start. Whole natural food provides the best nutrition. A poor diet backed up by supplements just doesn't cut it. In spite of years of scientific investigation, there is too just too much that we *don't* know about how food nourishes us to be assuming that anything contained in food is non-essential. A quick look at the history of the development of nutrition as a science will illustrate the point.

Historically speaking, the study of nutrition in a scientific way is relatively new; only about 100 years old. It was first supposed that animal life forms only needed a few essential components of food to sustain life and growth, and that the rest was pure waste. But experiments conducted to test this hypothesis proved it to be false.

In one of the first experiments, animals were fed a diet of pure extracted protein, carbohydrate (sugars and starches) and oils. The animals did not thrive. They became sick and they died. That discovery was the beginning of the search for and the discovery of the micronutrient factors.

Over time, all of the currently known essential vitamins and minerals were discovered - Vitamins A, B, C, D, E, K, calcium, magnesium, potassium, sodium, phosphorous, chromium, selenium, zinc etc. Discovery of these has taken a long time, and initial discoveries have often been less clear than one would like. For example, Vitamin B was first thought to be one vitamin. It was only later that it was realized that Vitamin B is a whole complex of vitamins - B1 (thiamine), B2 (riboflavin), B3 (niacin and niacinamide), B5 (pantothenic acid and its derivatives), B6 (pyridoxine and pyridoxine hydrochloride), B9 (folic acid), B12 (cyanocobalamin), B13 (orotic acid), B15(pangamic acid), B17 (nitrilosides, laetrile), choline, biotin, inositol, PABA (para-amino-benzoic acid) - and I'm sure the list will grow.

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Further, for a long time many of the trace elements were still thought to play no part whatsoever in human health. In fact it was believed that they were purely toxic contaminants of food that the body had to eliminate to prevent build up and damage to health. Selenium, zinc, copper, manganese, chromium and others have all fitted this category. In most cases, it was not until the second half of the 20th century that it was realized that the body needed these nutrients. For example a lack of iodine leads to goitre, and a lack of selenium leads to "Keshan Disease" (a kind of *cardiomyopathy* - i.e. a problem with the *heart muscle*).

It is when we have too much of these nutrients that they become toxic. But the same is true for *all* nutrients, *including water* . If you keep on drinking water and refuse to stop, you will kill yourself in the end. The truth is really that we need some nutrients in large quantities, some in small quantities, and some in miniscule amounts.

The point is, the search goes on. It has been quite a while now since anything new has been discovered to be essential, but that doesn't mean we have come to the end of such things. More discoveries are likely in the future.

Further, a growing area of nutritional research involves evaluating the benefits of accessory nutrients that *improve* health, as against being essential to health and life, and that list steadily grows as more and more is learned about the actions within the human body of various bio-chemicals found particularly in plants. These factors include the enzymes, bitter substances, anthocyanins, chlorophyll, plant hormones etc (etc referring *both* to things I haven't listed and to things as yet undiscovered by science). So as you can see, relying on supplements to provide all that your body needs to maximize health or to optimize your adaptive response to training makes no sense at all!

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Super Health – Nutrition– Part 2

How Do We Define Essential?

This week I continue with the theme that good food is essential for top nutrition. Supplements just aren't good enough. An understanding of the criteria for determining whether or not a food nutrient is essential will help clarify the issue further.

Nutritionally speaking, the dividing line between essential and non-essential nutrients may not be as clear-cut as it has been supposed. Those nutrients that have been seen to be desirable but not essential may only be non-essential from one rather short sighted and biased perspective.

The way the so-called" necessity" of nutrients for life is defined leaves a great deal to be desired. The basic supposition is that they are only essential if removing them from the diet causes some frank and obvious acute problem. For a start, that means that the symptoms are rapid in onset. An example would be scurvy, which most people know is due to a deficiency of vitamin C. This approach allows for easy research, because experiments don't have to be carried out for any more than a few months. Even a few weeks are enough in many cases.

But this doesn't tell the whole story. What if a nutrient is required to prevent a disease process which is very slow in onset, and which takes many years to develop? There is evidence that food factors such as the *anthocyanins* are involved in preventing cholesterol from depositing in the arteries. Long term, a disease called *atherosclerosis* develops because cholesterol is deposited in the arteries. It may take years to develop, but it will kill you just as dead as scurvy does because it will ultimately lead to heart attack or stroke. Yet I have *never* heard anyone from the scientific camp put forward the hypothesis that anthocyanins are a food factor that is essential to life in order to prevent death from heart attack or stroke.

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Whilst in the short term, it is true that they are not essential, in the long term, it should be clear that they *are* essential.

So I will make a bold but sensible claim here. God knows what he is doing. Whether we understand everything or not, since God has our good in mind and purpose, *everything* he has put in food is therefore a reason, to promote our health in some way, whether we yet recognise it as essential or not. It is my belief that if we studied long enough, we would ultimately prove that *everything* that we *know* about is essential in some way or another, even if only at the level of nanograms (millionths of a milligram) or picograms (millionths of a microgram). Take note though, that I believe that food is so complex that there will always be something that we *don't know* about.

This is why it is so dangerous to refine food. The belief that the things taken out are not essential is likely erroneous. If God has put them in, they are essential. So don't rely on supplements. Eat well.

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The Best Supplements for Health

Short Changed By Modern Agriculture

This week I continue with the theme that good food is essential for top nutrition. Supplements just aren't good enough. But the question then becomes, is our food really *good* food? A look at the approach of modern agriculture in food production illustrates how inadequate our food may be.

Generally speaking, agriculture is studied from the point of view of what are the *minimum* requirements for *plants* to grow and produce a harvest. It is profit driven, so it will always be a lowest common denominator or minimalist approach. The problem is that there are probably a myriad of things that may be contained within the plants which may not be essential to the *plant*, but which are very necessary to the health and well being of *people*, even if they are not actually essential to *life*. So the plant may look healthy and taste delicious, but still be deficient in health building factors.

Further, even when these substances are still present in the plants that we eat, the levels of them may be much lower than the ideal. And it is clear that many of these substances may still be in that rather large bag which we may call the "undiscovered unknowns". Unfortunately the approach of science tends to be, "If it's not proven essential it doesn't need to be in there", rather than "If it's present in plants grown on well balanced organic soil, we'd better make sure it stays there just in case it is one day proven essential."

Even if the food you purchase is completely organic, it is still limited in its health building potential by the quality of the soil on which it was grown. Whilst organic farming methods guarantee plants have optimum access to what is in the soil, there is no guarantee that everything that *should* be there is actually present. The problem is particularly acute in my homeland Australia, which has some of the most mineral and trace element poor soils in the world. And that was true *before* they were depleted further by the use of artificial farming methods.

Now all of this information may make it seem that supplements are the best answer. They help, but I don't believe they are the best answer.

The Best Nutrition Supplements

One partial solution to fact that our food is often less than it could be, is to eat organically as much as possible. Another is to concentrate the nutrients by juicing plant foods, which allows us to take in larger quantities of these nutrients than we ever could by eating the whole food.

But even there we may fall short, because since the earth was created many nutrients have been washed out of the soil. That is why the sea is so salty. Even organically grown foods may therefore be deficient or unbalanced in their nutrient content. So one useful tip (especially to make sure you obtain more ideal levels of minerals and trace elements) is to grow your own vegetables and fruits at home, fertilized with seaweed based fertilizers. Yet another is to take supplements that are derived from the ocean. One

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normal sized kelp tablet contains as much iodine as 70 lbs of fresh vegetables, and is rich in many other trace elements.

Further, the mineral balance in seawater itself is very close to that found in human blood, and it contains all of the trace elements needed by humans. And when one compares the health of sea creatures with land animals, the differences are marked. Sea creatures never develop arteriosclerosis or cancer, yet the first exists in all land animals to some degree, and the second is far more common than we would like, both for humans and animals.

It is the superiority of the mineral rich food chain of the ocean that is largely responsible. So if you are to use it as a mineral tonic, how much seawater do you need? Historically, naturopaths recommend one to two tablespoons daily, which is 20 to 40 milliliters. Although it will be difficult to see immediate results, the long-term benefits of such supplements should not be overlooked.

I will be discussing more about useful supplements in a later article, but for right now, I just want to get you to think more holistically. And as a first rule of thumb, remember that any food from the ocean is better for you than land grown food, and any land grown food that has been fertilized by any ocean based fertilizer is superior to food grown using any other method of plant feeding.

Paul earned an honours degree in science from Melbourne University, Australia in the 1970's. During the 1980's he studied for four years full time in Naturopathy (including remedial massage therapy) at the Southern School of Natural Therapies (Melbourne), with further training in herbal medicine via a postgraduate diploma in herbal medicine. In the 1990's he attained a Bachelor of Ministries degree from the Australian College of Theology (Sydney). He is the author of the book "Super Health and How to Achieve It", which he is currently revising. The revised edition will be available early 2004. Paul may be contacted via email at paul@supa-health.com .

Preamble to "Resistance Training – Factors In Program Design"

G'day. That's Aussie for hi. What you are getting with this bonus is a distillation of what I have learned over years of personal research into training methods, and from actual training for a variety of sports. In the last thirty-five years I have run to keep fit, and been involved in sprint and marathon kayak paddling, and martial arts, mainly traditional shotokan karate. For every sport, including the endurance sports, I have found work in the gym to be invaluable for improving performance. And for me, it has always been about performance. I don't actually care what I look like. You may want the "look". I couldn't care less. Oh well, each to his own.

I'm just under 6 feet tall. When I ran, I weighed about 155 pounds. When I paddled the kayak or trained in karate, my weight was around 175. And at one time, I trained up to 210 pounds, just to prove I could do it. So I know what training is required to put on the muscle, and what is required to make that muscle stronger. Of course that is not the only requirement. Good nutrition is also required. But that is not what this bonus is about.

In this bonus you will find a discussion on the various training factors that contribute to the differing adaptive responses that the muscle can make. So I discuss things like time under tension, tempo, sets, reps, tricets, super-sets, pre-exhaustion, training to failure, periodisation, balancing your program, warming up, and stretching, and how to avoid overtraining. I don't think you'll find as concise a summary of the necessary information anywhere else. And I should know, I've been looking for such a thing for years!

Nowadays, I have a fifty-year-old body. I'm still keeping in reasonable shape. But I'm that flat out in other areas of my life, that I don't have time to be wasting doing my resistance training. So it has been necessary for me to pull together the ins and outs of training so that I can maximise training effect whilst minimising training time. So let me give you the first tip. If you spend more than half an hour in the gym in any one session, you're wasting your time.

If you study this bonus thoroughly, you ought to be able to design a program that will be specific for the goals you want to achieve. And if you need further advice from a professional, at least you'll be able to understand the point of what he/she is saying!

When the revised edition of my book “Super Health and How To Achieve It!” comes out, it’ll have an upgraded version of this information, with other things besides. But for now, you’ll have to settle for what I’m offering here. So set your goals, and go for it! May this information bless you, from Paul Davies.

Paul would like to offer you the following e-book bonus as thanks for purchasing this writers best e-book. Click-Here to download “an overview of resistance training techniques” written by Paul Davies.

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Building a Healthy Body on a Small Budget

One of the greatest misconceptions people have about making healthy food choices is that it somehow “costs too much” to eat right. Nothing could be further from the truth! In fact, people often forget to factor in the sick days, prescriptions, doctor visits, and the price of a reduced quality of life that comes from eating an unhealthy diet. If you incorporate even just a few of these basic strategies on a regular basis, eating for optimal nutrition health can actually a sound economic decision and valuable investment in your quality of life.

1. **Buy Carbs in Bulk.** Buy oatmeal, brown rice, potatoes, and beans in bulk. Always buy the larger economy sized containers when they are on sale.

2. **Never buy full price meat products.** Meat can be frozen for several months so you should only buy it when it is on sale. Watch newspaper circulars for “teaser” sales of meats designed to bring customers in the store. Tuna, chicken breast, and lean beef cuts are ALWAYS on sale at least twice a month. Look for "reduced for quick sale" or other daily specials and stock up when the price is right.

3. **Shop using a grocery list.** Doesn’t impulse buy. Every item you buy that you don’t need adds to your perceived cost of eating healthier! Sticking to a list will help ensure you do not misappropriate the grocery funds.

4. **Buy Generic.** Let go of your brand & store loyalties. Shop by best value, not brand name.

5. **Limit purchases of toiletries & cleaning products& pre-packaged foods.** This includes overpriced "diet" foods. These are typically items that are regularly on sale and can be stored a long time so don't buy them for full price. You do not need separate cleansers for everything in the house or to buy what you can make quickly at a fraction of the cost. You do, however, need quality groceries to fuel your body's purposes.

6. **Don't throw anything away.** Freezing leftovers like extra rice, sauces, or chicken in 1/2 c "snack" baggies will money *and* time. Save for fast meals or lunches instead of eating out.

7. **Primarily shop the outer ring of the store.** Most of what you *really* need to eat is always located in the outer ring of the store. The closer you get to the "epicenter", you'll start to notice chips, soda, too many cans and packages, and finally, cake mixes and ice cream.

8. **Make your own salads.** Bagged lettuce and pre-cut vegetables cost 3-4 times the price of uncut versions. You can tear two heads of dark leafy lettuce or cut up a few pounds of broccoli in less than one minute for the same grab & go convenience.

9. **Limit experimentation with nutritional supplements, particularly if you are just beginning a training program.** Buy one flavor of protein at a time when it is on sale. Buy what you need to keep training hard but don't go crazy buying products which promise the results that only consistent diet and persistent efforts deliver.

10. **Don't smoke or drink heavily.** A carton a week habit of smokes or two nights at the bar is worth 50 pounds of sale priced boneless, skinless chicken breast and at least a few years of life.

11. **Eat clean..at home.** Learn to cook. Stay home. Save your money for next Tuesday's meat sale or your monthly gym membership.

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10 Tips for Modifying Family Favorites

As the New Year approaches, many have a cleaned up diet on their mind. In fact, this is a great time of year to get "buy in" from your family members on your fitness lifestyle! With this in mind, let's take note of the simple things that can be done to modify family favorites so they can be included in our diets more often. Here are a few simple guidelines to help you clean up your family's favorite meals.

1. Reduce or omit fats. You can usually reduce the called for amount of oil in regular recipes by at least 1/3-1/2 without affecting taste. Use leaner cuts of meat (such as chicken breast instead of the whole bird). Try sautéing with broth, vegetable juice, citrus juices, and non-stick cooking spray.

2. Decrease simple carbohydrates. Sugar and other useless carbs have a way of sneaking into everything from our breakfast cereals to the gum we chew. Use sugar replacements or cut the amount of sugar used in recipes by 1/3-1/2.

3. Substitute,substitute,substitute . Look for ways to substitute common ingredients. Replace 1 egg with two egg whites, oil with an equal amount of applesauce, or sugar with an artificial sweetener.

4. Bulk up with vegetables. When you remove excess pasta, sauce, or other ingredients from a dish but know you'll want a big plate, just add extra fibrous vegetables like broccoli or green peppers.

5. Go naked. Learn to enjoy the texture, tastes, and aroma of food that isn't drenched in gravies or bathed in cheese. Think about things you can do to make dishes with ingredients left closer to their natural state. Good, fresh, simple food doesn't need to soak in butter.

6. Get fresh. Use fresh or frozen versions of ingredients as much as you can as opposed to dried, processed, canned, or heavily salted or preservative laden ingredients. The taste, scent, and nutritional value fresh herbs and vegetables cooking on the stove will be unmatched.

7. Understand Aesthetic Value. Use different colors and textures of vegetables or two opposing flavors in a dish to make them more interesting such as red and green vegetables or soft and crunchy ingredients in the same dish.

8. Spice it right. Use vegetables that are naturally sweeter like red peppers or tomatoes or spicier like chile peppers, bold like garlic and onion, or tangy like lemon juice to minimize the need for heavy sauces, sugars, and salts.

9. Increase the Protein . While your busy skimming out saturated fat and empty sugar calories, think about getting adequate lean protein and increase the amount called for in a recipe.

10. Mind Portions. Sometimes all you need to do is remember portion sizes. The 4 cup serving of rice on your plate at a restaurant is not a serving- it's a cheap way of tricking you into thinking you got a good deal!

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Trouble Shooting the Protein Shake

We've all got our own quirky taste and texture preferences, even for simple protein shakes. Here are a few techniques you may find useful in preparing your next protein shake.

If your protein shake is:

Too thin: Try adding a few ice cubes, frozen fruit, or a tablespoon of sugar-free instant pudding mix to thicken it.

Too thick: Some protein mixes have guar gum or other artificial thickeners in them. Instead of throwing them out, you can make shakes using only half the packet, mixing in a regular whey protein to cover the protein gap.

Not creamy enough: Try using a tablespoon of sugar-free pudding if you make your shakes with water or milk. If you use milk, you can try using milk with higher fat content (1 or 2% instead of skim) or just use a tablespoon of dry, sugar-free instant pudding mix.

Not "foamy" or frothy enough: Extend the "whip" time in the blender to "fluff" the shake.

Won't dissolve: Solubility problems usually have to do with the particular brand of protein that you buy. Your best option is to first blend your liquid and ice and slowly add the protein to the blender. Look for an "instantized" protein that blends with a few shakes to avoid the problem all together.

Not sweet enough: Add a packet or two of Splenda or a small piece of banana. Fructose (fruit sugar) is 70% sweeter than sucrose (table sugar) so even just a small piece of banana or other fruit go a long way in providing sweetness.

Weak vanilla flavor: A ½ tsp of imitation vanilla flavor or ¼ tsp vanilla extract will enhance the vanilla flavor without adding calories. Alternatively, you could add a tablespoon of sugar-free instant vanilla pudding for just 13 calories.

Weak chocolate flavor: A teaspoon of real cocoa powder will give you a nice chocolate flavor without adding the sugar that comes with using chocolate syrup. This is a great idea for those on tighter budgets that can only purchase one flavor of protein at a time because you can add cocoa to vanilla protein and make a chocolate flavor.

Protein sticks to blender glass: Always add the liquid to your blender or shaker first. When blending thicker shakes, try pouring the protein into the blender as it whirls or lightly pushing the powder down with a spoon to ensure it mixes.

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Is "to go": To cut down on dishes and make a handy "to go" shake, you may be able to use a pint or quart Mason jar in place of your blender pitcher. Simply remove the blending attachment from the pitcher; if it twists onto the jar (like a cap) it will work. Put your drink ingredients into the jar, twist on the blending assembly, turn the jar top-down onto the blender and hit the switch. Voila!

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"Fast Fuel - Time Saving Cooking Tips for Busy Athletes"

Today's world moves at lighting speed. Busy people often fall prey to the fast food restaurants that have cropped on every corner to meet the demand of people who "don't have time" to cook and make it very convenient to live off a fast food diet. For the person seeking to build a healthy, strong, and lean body, fast food is simply not a viable everyday option option. Fortunately, with just a little planning and advance preparation, you can keep fast food runs to a minimum by implementing a few of these tips.

1. ***Cook in Bulk.*** Set aside 2 one-hour periods per week to cook staples that you can use to prepare meals from all other days. For example, store a covered container of brown rice, baked potatoes or cooked chicken breast. Cooked chicken can be refrigerated 2-3 days, so you can easily re-heat it and eat it plain or turn into a quick stir-fry.

2. ***Freeze in individual portions*** . Store pre-measured or weighed foods in individual portions. Plastic "snack" size bags hold approximately 1/2 cup of cooked rice or dry oatmeal so keep a few on hand. When you have leftovers, immediately freeze them in plastic compartment trays with snap-on lids. For example, save leftover rice, broccoli, and chicken for a wonderful homemade frozen meal to take to work.

3. "**Flash" Marinate.** Keep those taste buds entertained so you aren't tempted by the desire to eat out. When you get back from the store, cut and measure out your chicken or beef into your specific size portions. Seal each portion and toss in spices, lemon juice, salsa, or any other marinade and freeze. When you take the chicken out to thaw (in the refrigerator to limit bacteria growth, of course), it will simultaneously marinate and defrost. ***This method will reduce the freezer storage time so be sure to eat the chicken within a m onth's time.*

4. ***Precut.*** Wash and precut broccoli and lettuce heads when you get home from the store and store them in a big bowl. A damp paper towel across the top of the greens and a lid will help them keep all week. You can add more vegetables to the salad if you have time or just use the greens as a base to many kinds of salads you have during the week.

5. ***Pack meals the night before*** . Packing your meals the night before ensures you won't be in a scramble for emergency protein at a fast food joint or have to drink protein shakes all day. You can even prepare your breakfast so that all you need to do is warm it up in the morning.

6. ***Maintain a store of emergency food.*** Keep a small stock of emergency protein like canned tuna, canned chicken, protein powder, and one or two pre-made canned shakes at work, in your car, in gym bag, at home and anywhere else where you are frequently. You may also wish to keep oatmeal and nuts or natural peanut butter on hand for "emergency" carbs and fats. If you do this, you will never be without good food and repeatedly finding you "have to" eat food that will inhibit you from reaching your goals!

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"Beginner's Tips for Focusing on Form"

Once you become comfortable with weights and performing various exercises, you start to become braver with your poundage and begin to explore new exercises. Wanting to progress in poundage and technique is *good* and a *normal* part of the maturing in your training. However, the completion of reps must not be at the expense of good form. Here are a few tips for beginners to think about before heading to the dumbbell racks.

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#1. Learn it Right

Consistently performing sloppy reps doesn't stimulate muscles effectively and *doesn't* yield optimal results. Really. Spend time reading about new exercises and seeing them properly demonstrated. Make sure you understand what muscle groups the exercise is supposed to target to help you feel if you're on the right track. Ask a trainer or the gym manager for some assistance if you are thinking about trying a new exercise.

#2 Do it Light

Always practice a new exercise with a lighter poundage that you think you should be using, especially the first time. Test it out, *feel* how it works compared to other exercises for the same body part, do some higher rep sets to perfect the movement before you start trying to set a new gym record in the shrug! Be particularly conservative on poundage when learning compound movements like the squat, bench press, or deadlift. Get your technique honed on these foundational exercises and the results (and ability to handle heavier loads) will come over time.

#3 Check Yourself Out

Yep, the mirrors are there for you to check yourself out so don't be afraid to get "caught" looking at yourself. Watch the targeted muscle group working, monitor your rep speed, make sure you aren't slouching or allowing other body parts to take on the work of the muscle group you are attempting to isolate.

#4 Ask for the Check

If something continues feeling awkward or you just want to make sure you're on the right path, ask a trainer for a quick form check. Unless you are female, you'll find most people, at the risk of offending you, will not approach you to point out your incorrect form, even when if borderlines on dangerous. Don't waste hours in the gym doing things wrong or risk permanent injury by getting into the habit of performing an exercise wrong just because you never confirmed you were doing it right to begin with.

#5 Picking Pounds

This is a critical component of bodybuilding success that is greatly misunderstood. Generally women go too light and men go too heavy for their body to see continuous improvement.

Heavy, moderate, and light poundage: First, remember these terms are relative to you alone. You may be stronger walking into a gym than you realize or have a muscle group that simply lags behind the rest of your body that requires a different size dumbbell that your buddy. You cannot continuously shape and improve your aesthetics only by lifting light weights and you cannot continuously make strength and size gains by only lifting the heaviest load possible for 3 reps.

Heavy is a weight that YOU can lift correctly and intensely for about 5-8 reps.

Moderate is a weight YOU can lift correctly and intensely for about 8-10 reps.

Light is a weight YOU can lift correctly and intensely for 12-15 reps.

The last few reps of any set should be a struggle, regardless of which rep range you are utilizing. All rep ranges should produce some sort of stimulation be it burning, a pump, or total heart pounding exertion. When you find you are exceeding the rep range you are targeting on a particular exercise, it's time to switch it up, pick up the next size and face a new challenge.

#6. Leave your ego in the car

Save the singles, doubles, and triples for powerlifters or those who have spotters and know what they are doing. You can seriously injure yourself if you insist on training in a manner that is only secretly intended

to impress others. ***Be competitive , push yourself but above all, be patient.*** The ability to handle progressively larger dumbbells will come through the use of proper form and persistent, progressive training.

Follow-Up Experiment: *When you first hit the gym, find a guy w ho does things like use his entire body to swing a barbell back up or only occasionally trains legs by loading up the leg press and allowing it to drop just a few inches before struggling to push it back up (this is not an example of intensity or proper fo rm even though he may look "hardcore"). Next, pick a woman who never uses more than 5 or 8 -pound dumbbells for ANY exercise or who only adds 5 - pound plates to the leg press. Keep an eye on these two over a period of time and see if this method of lifti ng and poundage selection results in any significant changes in their physiques.*

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Nutrition Success Strategies for Summer

One of the easiest ways to advance in your fitness program is to take advantage of the seasonal advantages of summer. Produce is cheaper, everyone is grilling, and there are plenty of reasons to get out of the house. What can *you* do this summer to get into better shape?

Eat Extra Vegetables & Enjoy Fruits
During the summer months, dark, leafy greens and other fibrous green vegetables can be purchased at very low prices from grocery stores and local farmers markets. Foods like dark leaf lettuce (red, green, romaine), broccoli, and asparagus are all very low in calories, high in fiber, and nutrient dense. Serving fibrous fresh greens with a lean protein and perhaps a yam, baked potato, or brown rice, offers your body a perfect meal.

While most bodybuilding diets are not particularly high in fruit, there is one you'll see low priced all summer- strawberries. Dipped in light, low-fat vanilla yogurt, even a few can be a treat. Just 2/3 c. of strawberries offers 2 grams of fiber and 90% of the USRDA for Vitamin C at a cost of only 50 calories. Remember that hard training athletes need more than the typical RDA when making food choices.

Outdoor Grilling
Use your outdoor grill as often as possible and be sure to grill up some extra chicken or beef patties for meals on the go. Grilled meats offer a special taste for your tastebuds if you are accustomed to eating boiled or countertop grilled meats several times a day. Extra meats can be easily thrown on top of a salad or made into healthy stir-frys, too.

Don't limit your grill space to meats alone- you can also grill fresh vegetables quite easily. Lay asparagus across the grill and sprinkle with garlic salt or lay a piece of foil on the top rack and grill tomatoes, red and green pepper slices, onions, mushrooms, or any other vegetable you'd like.
At barbeques, stick to the protein, vegetable, and undressed salad choices. Unless you've planned to splurge, do your best to avoid over grazing on chips, liquor, brownies, and potato salad.

Outdoor Activity
Take advantage of the longer daytime hours to enjoy increased outdoor activity. Run, walk or take works breaks outdoors. Consider pinch hitting for your friend's recreational softball team or walking to the grocery store when you only have a few things to pick up. While not directly a nutritional issue, your activity level will greatly affect the outcome of your nutritional success.

Stella Juarez is the About.com Guide to Bodybuilding and the author of "Stella's Kitchen: Creative Cooking for Fun, Flavor, and a Lean Strong Body". She is the Fitness Chef for Nutros.com and a contributor to various web sites and magazines. Free healthy recipes and more of her articles can be found at http:// www.bodybuilding.about.com

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Top Staying Healthy and Avoiding Injuries

Making exercise mistakes can not only cause serious injuries, but can also take your drive and motivation. You can prevent most injuries by following these general guidelines.

Listen To The Experts : Not taking recommendations and advice is the most common mistake many make. It is always a good idea to consult your doctor before beginning any program. It may also be a good idea to hire a personal trainer, especially if you have been inactive or have special circumstances like joint pain or recent injury. The right personal trainer will have the experience and knowledge to get you on track from the start. Without the help of a fitness professional you may waste a lot of time and get hurt in the process.

Choosing The Wrong Exercises : Most beginners don't know enough about their bodies to know which exercises are working which muscles. Selecting the correct exercise can make all the difference in your comfort and safety. Did you know that most new exercisers drop out of programs within the first 3-6 months? The reasons they gave were not enjoying the exercises and being bored. They saw exercise as "punishment" and not at all rewarding. Find something you enjoy: swimming, walking, biking, aerobic classes, or weight training. Another reason was that they were not seeing results. This goes back to finding a personal trainer. Without knowing better, you could be sabotaging yourself.

Set Realistic Goals : While it is true that regular exercise can help you drop a few pounds, it is also true that you cannot burn fat in your thighs alone. If your goal is weight loss, remember that proper eating habits and regular exercise go hand in hand. You cannot lose the "love-handles" with a machine, it takes patience and dedication to a lifestyle change.

Know Your Limits : Monitor your body. If it hurts, don't do it. BUT, if you are a novice in the gym and are doing weight training – you are going to hurt. You will know the difference between muscle pain and joint

pain. Muscle soreness is a normal response from stressing the muscles. The good news – it gets better the more you do it – so keep moving.

Too Much Too Soon : See above and then read on…Going all out on your first day could cause serious injury. Ease you way into any exercise program. Take is slow, hire a trainer, and remember that you don't have to do it all in one day – you have a lifetime to exercise.

Poor Technique : Not doing an exercise correctly is a major concern for newcomers. A personal trainer can help you by demonstrating an exercise for you and then watching you and correcting any problems. Poor form and technique is one of the main causes of exercise related injury. Never take anything for granted when exercising.

Not Warming Up : A warm up prepares your body for exercise and helps to decrease the chance for injury. Enough said.

Over-training: As crazy as it seems, many people do too much exercise, much more than their bodies can handle. Symptoms of over-training include: a high resting heart rate, emotional instability (crying at anything, screaming for no reason), muscle soreness that will not go away, stomach upset, and lethargy. This is not a joking matter! Take a few days off and slowly work your way back into your routine.

Exercising should be something that is enjoyable and something that you can make a part of your day-to-day activities.

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The First Steps To Fitness – Taking Action

Everywhere you look, in women's magazines, television, the Internet, and even in your doctor's office – you see information about weight loss and exercise. As you become more health conscious, and decide to **take action** – finding a program that fits your lifestyle is very important. You may feel like you are too busy to take time out for yourself – between your job and family responsibilities – but what is good health worth to you? While it is tempting to start yet another "diet" and "try " to lose weight, you might want to skip that and go straight to a professional who can help you design a weight loss and exercise program around your life that will take the guesswork out of the equation, and get you off on the right foot. Getting healthy and fit doesn't have to take hours of your time; with the right help you can do it.

Beginning a weight loss and exercise program is a big step and you want to make sure that you are going into any program armed with a few things:

1. **Your doctor's permission**. Especially if you have heart problems, high blood pressure, diabetes or have recently had a medical procedure preformed.

2. **Specific goals.** What do you want to accomplish? Simply saying you want to lose weight and tone your muscles isn't good enough. How much weight do you want to lose? How long will you allow yourself to lose the weight or reach the goal? What steps can you take to reach that goal?

3. **Information and questions.** Gather information about local programs or go online and check out the programs available. If you have never tried a weight loss program before or feel like you have started and stopped too many times, you would do much better with someone locally who can help keep you motivated and help you reach your goals. Professionals in the health and fitness industry are here because we have a desire to help people get where they want to be. A big part of what we do everyday is stay on top of the latest research, supplements and medical information so we can pass that knowledge on to you. ASK, ASK, ASK!!! One thing to remember: If something seems to good to be true – it probably is.

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Congratulations! You have taken the first step to better health by deciding to do something about it. But now what? Finding a fitness professional, selecting a program and making it through the first week are all a part of your ultimate success.

Finding a Personal Trainer in you area should be a simple process. You can search Internet directories (A to Z Fitness has a great one), look in your local phone book's yellow pages, or start asking around. Good Personal Trainers have happy clients very ready to give you a referral. Contact several that you find. When you get them on the phone, ask them how they assess your ability to do different workouts, how they design you workout, and what you can expect during your first workout. Also ask them where they got their certification, is the certification current, how many years have they been a Personal Trainer, and are they insured. They should offer you a complimentary session so you can see if you would like to hire them to work with you, but if they don't ASK for one. *Always take a test drive* .

During your session with the trainer, you will not only be evaluating the program, but you will also be evaluating the Personal Trainer. I've listed a few things I think you should look for (and expect) during your initial session.

1. Did they introduce themself?
2. Did they explain the health history forms clearly and tell you why they have you complete them?
3. Did they go over liability forms in the event you are injured? (Please don't be offended when the trainer goes through the paperwork with you. It is for your protection.)
4. Did the trainer go over the health history and ask you questions about the particulars? Did they let you know about any possible health problems that need a doctor's attention prior to training?
5. Did the trainer take your weight and measurements, body fat composition or other fitness tests before you began the workout? Were the results explained to you?

During the Workout:

1. Did they go over what you were going to do before actually taking you onto the gym floor?
2. Did the trainer ask you to do a warm-up exercise (walk on a treadmill or ride a stationary bike) prior to hitting the weights?
3. Did the trainer explain why a warm-up is necessary?
4. Did the trainer demonstrate the exercise (proper form and technique) before asking you to perform the exercise?
5. Were you monitored verbally i.e. How does that feel? Do you feel any pain through the movement? Is the exercise too easy or too difficult?

After the Workout:

1. Were you given instruction on proper stretching and cool down?
2. Did the trainer go over your testing and workout again to give you the opportunity to ask questions?
3. Were you given follow-up information (i.e. how to get in touch with the trainer, their hours and pricing)?
4. Did the trainer set another appointment for you?

The biggest concern you should have aside from the above is simple: Did you feel that your best interests and safety were the top priority with the trainer and were you comfortable with them? Remember, you are paying for a service and should be 100% satisfied with the trainer you hire. However, you also need to remember that while they may do their job almost flawlessly – you too will have to put in the hours and discipline to make your program a success.

So how do you make it through the first week? While working with your trainer, let them do the thinking and planning for you. But there are a few things you can do while not with them that will make it easier for you.

1. Schedule your workout in your date book even if you don't have an appointment with your trainer. Putting on the calendar makes it easier to keep your commitment by not planning other things during that time. It will also encourage your family to not ask for that time for things that can wait.

2. Pack your clothes and other necessities the night before and put your bag in your car. This will save you time in the morning. This is also a good time to pack your lunch and snacks for the next day.
3. Like to read? Buy or borrow a book on tape to listen to while you walk on the treadmill or ride the bike. Taking your attention off of the time will help it go by faster.
4. Meet and Greet. Get to know the members of the club. Most will miss you if you skip a day. Being missed is a great motivator.
5. Some clubs and trainers offer e-mail reminders for your workouts as well as fitness tips or online newsletters. Inquire about what you may have available to you. Knowledge is power, never stop learning.

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It's All About Attitude

Did you know that your attitude about weight loss affects your ability to succeed? Let's consider a few statements and see how you feel about it…

I have thought a lot about my eating habits and physical activities to pinpoint what I need to change.

- You really can't change what you don't understand or see as a potential problem. Keeping a record of what you eat and what activities you participate in will help to identify what you are doing and what you may need to change. This is also a great way to identify obstacles (or excuses) to regular activity.

I will only feel successful if I lose a lot of weight.

- Too many people have an illusion of reaching a weight that is much lower than a weight they can realistically maintain. What you must do it redefine success. Successful weight loss comes when you can maintain healthful habits and regular activity. You also need to consider your body type and set small goals for yourself. Your first goal could be to lose a few pounds while learning how to do weight training exercises and cardio.

I have accepted the idea that I need to make permanent, not temporary, changes in my eating and activities to be successful

- You should enjoy what you are doing to lose weight – anything that is highly restrictive will be hard to maintain and will not result in the permanent loss you are looking for – chances are if you are making changes only for the short term – you will not only gain back the weight you lose, but also a few more pounds.

I think that losing weight will help with other problems in my life.

- While being overweight may cause social problems, it is most often not the only cause. You may only set your self up for disappointment by anticipating miracles through weight lose. Weight loss will make you feel more at ease and more self-confident. If health concerns are present – such as high blood pressure or diabetes – weight loss can help to decrease the need for medications – please check with your physician first.

I am ready to commit time each week to plan my food and activities.

- Studies have supported time and again that if you take the time to prepare – you are more likely to succeed. Successful weight loss is not possible without taking the time to think about yourself, your problem areas and develop ways to deal with them. You must make the commitment to plan and organize.

I want to lose weight through a weight loss program, even though my life is unusually stressful right now.

- Losing weight is a stressful activity by itself, so if you are already under lots of stress, it may be difficult to successfully implement a program with so many other things taking your attention. You may want to reorganize and delegate and then reconsider your weight loss options.

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Beliefs, Needs and Desires

How do you fit into the world around you? Did you know that your needs and desires grow out of your beliefs about yourself and the way you fit into the world? Believing that you need approval from others may inspire you to make choices that are in everyone's best interest but your own.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Do I desire to make a change in my weight?
- Do I need to make a change in my weight?
- Do I desire to change the way that I eat?
- Do I need to change the way that I eat?
- Do I desire to exercise?
- Do I need to exercise?

Did you notice a pattern in the way you answered these questions? Did you answer no to all of the desires, but yes to all of the needs? Did you have a combination of responses?

Our needs and desires can confuse the reasons that we go on diets and why we feel like we have to make changes. Dieting has conditioned us to believe that all we need for success is strong "will-power". But no one ever addressed whether the changes were necessary or healthy, or if they were even possible. The rationale was "if you want it, you can have it". But I think we need to look deeper into our reasons for making changes in our eating and exercising habits, before we jump on the wagon.

There are 6 ingredients that help you to make a successful change in your life.

- Real Desire for a change in you life. You have to want something enough to be willing to sit down and face your fears of reaching your goal. The fear of success has kept many people from reaching what they want. Without a true desire to keep you going, it is easy to become overwhelmed and intimidated.
- Successful Belief System. Believe that you can have what you want. This does require that you choose realistic goals and give yourself time to reach them. Believe in yourself and create a mental picture of your success.
- Knowledge. Understand how you are going to get from where you are now to where you want to be. Adopting a healthier lifestyle is easier when you have a basic understanding of exercise, nutrition and most importantly, yourself. Ask for referrals and start reading.
- Make a Plan. Approach each day with a plan of what you want to accomplish for the day. Plotting the specifics makes it easier to stick with it when the going gets tough. Remember: the best plan is one that is forgiving and flexible. Take it one step at a time and opposed to all or nothing, and you'll make progress.
- Learn from Setbacks. Think of the road to success as one that snakes around a mountain. There is no straight line, we all experience times when we have feelings of failure and guilt. The key is to accept them and move on.
- Acknowledge Progress. Learn to acknowledge and reward all accomplishments. Change occurs in a series of small steps. Stop and congratulate yourself for even the smallest achievements.

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Top Exercise and Pregnancy

I have received many questions about pregnancy and exercise. I can speak from experience that continuing to exercise during pregnancy helps the delivery and recovery process. Being pregnant is one of the most exciting and confusing times in a woman's life. It can also be one filled with questions about your personal well-being and that of the growing baby. While all women should consult their obstetrician for specific recommendations, most healthy women can continue to exercise with slight modifications throughout the course of their pregnancy. There are many aspects of what to do and what to avoid, and with that in mind – this is only a small part of the total picture.

The American College of Gynecologists and Obstetricians has developed a list of recommendations for exercise during pregnancy. Please note that these are for women with NO ADDITIONAL RISK FACTORS for a complicated pregnancy.

- Women can continue to get health benefits from physical activity performed at least three times each week.
- Women should avoid exercising in the supine position after the first trimester, and should avoid prolonged periods of motionless standing.
- Pregnant women should modify exercise intensity according to how they feel. They should stop exercising when fatigued and never exercise to exhaustion. Some women may be able to continue doing weight-training exercises at an intensity similar to that prior to pregnancy. Non-weight bearing exercises such as cycling, walking and swimming generally may be continued throughout pregnancy.
- Avoid any exercise that may result in a loss of balance or trauma to the abdominal area.
- Women who are exercising need to be sure to consume enough calories to fuel both the exercise and the pregnancy.
- Pregnant women must be careful to drink enough water to stay properly hydrated and wear clothing that will allow their bodies to "breathe" and not become overheated.

Women who have the following should not exercise during or immediately after pregnancy:

- Cardiac Disease
- Vaginal Bleeding or Placenta Previa
- Incompetent Cervix
- Ruptured Membranes
- History of 3 or more Spontaneous Miscarriages

Consult your doctor with any specific questions regarding your pregnancy, and remember that you should only do what you feel like doing. Deciding to exercise should be a decision made with your doctor. Don't use pregnancy as an excuse to not exercise and eat what you want, because you have to remember that once your bundle of joy arrives, you will want to try and return to your pre-pregnancy weight as soon as possible.

Exercise can be very beneficial to your health during pregnancy. Exercise will allow you to keep pregnancy weight gain within established guidelines, reduce stress and anxiety and (hopefully) allow you to stay more active throughout the course of your pregnancy. Of course, it is always a good idea to discuss your plans with your doctor before beginning or continuing any exercise program during pregnancy.

The physiological changes that occur during pregnancy may make it more difficult to maintain a steady exercise program, but with a few modifications, most women should be able to continue with no problems.

During the first trimester, your body is changing even if you don't notice yet. Your basal body temperature is higher and your body has a higher metabolic rate than before pregnancy. Because of this you should use caution when exercising in warm or humid conditions because your body will not cool as quickly and you can overheat quickly even in an air-conditioned environment. You should never exercise if you have a fever. You should decrease the intensity of your workout and extend the time you allow yourself for recovery.

You will probably notice that fatigue sets in quickly during the first 12 weeks of your pregnancy. While this is a common complaint, you need to take care to get enough rest even if that means skipping a workout to take a quick nap. You will also need to take notice that your blood sugar levels can quickly drop causing you to feel clammy and light headed. You can avoid this by eating a small snack about 30 minutes before you exercise. Foods high in complex carbs are a good source of energy (natural peanut butter on whole wheat for example).

Good exercises for the first trimester are listed below. Keep a close watch on how you feel during exercise. Any movements or positions that are uncomfortable should be avoided and if you feel sick or have sharp pains in the abdominal area, call your doctor immediately. You may also want to find a Pre/Post-Natal Exercise Specialist in your area. These are individuals who work with pregnant clients and can help you find a program that will meet your needs during your pregnancy.

Good Pregnancy Exercises

- Stretching – Daily while you still can do it comfortably. You should avoid deep stretches as your pregnancy progresses because of connective tissue laxity.
- Walking – Walking is a good, low-impact cardio activity that doesn't require any special equipment. Monitor your heart rate and drink plenty of water.
- Swimming – Takes a great deal of pressure off of the joints and lower back.
- Upper body exercises have been shown to increase fitness for those that find floor work too strenuous.
- Machine exercises are preferred over free-weight work during pregnancy.

It is very important to exercise only if you feel up to it. Between extreme fatigue and morning sickness, the thought of pulling yourself to the gym may be the last thing on your mind. Go ahead and pack your bag, take cues from your body and go if you have the energy. Like I mentioned before, continued exercise during pregnancy makes labor and delivery easier, and helps to keep you from gaining more weight than your doctor recommends.

As your body grows during your pregnancy, some exercises you have been doing comfortably will need modification and others will need to be eliminated all together. During the second and third trimesters, you will need to pay special attention to the signals your body is giving you during exercise and make adjustments as needed.

Watch your center of gravity: After the fourth month it changes and you can quickly find yourself off balance. Your baby is very well protected by the amniotic sac should a fall occur, but the best protection is prevention!

Don't lie on your back: After the fourth month your uterus has grown out of your pelvis and the weight of it, when you are on your back, can depress the vena cava. This reduces the amount of blood flow, and therefore oxygen, to your baby. Most women will find that they will also become dizzy or light-headed if they lie on their backs. This is something that should always be avoided, not just during exercise. Sleeping on your side with a pillow supporting your abdominal area is also a good idea.

Monitor yourself and don't over do it: This includes overheating. Raising your core temperature too much can affect the baby adversely. Always drink water before, during and after exercising. Listening to your body when something hurts or doesn't feel right, that means stop.

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Focus on fluid movements: Bouncing exercises are not great for your joints or bones at any point, but especially during pregnancy. Your body produces a hormone called relaxin that actually softens the ligaments allowing your bones to spread for the birth of your baby. While this is a good thing, it does predispose you for a higher risk of injury when doing bouncing or jerking motions.

Stop if you experience any of these:

- Dizziness
- Faintness
- Headaches
- Shortness of Breath
- Uterine contractions
- Vaginal Bleeding or fluid leaking
- Heart Palpitations

Heart rates: Generally women should keep their heart rate under 140 beats per minute. However, for some women this may be too high. So, the easiest way to do this is what is called the talk test. Simply put, if you are too winded while exercising to carry on a conversation, you are doing too much.

Take care and stay in touch with your doctor if you experience any problems.

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Diets Don't Work

With the promises of fast results, many diet and weight loss gimmicks have preyed upon the female American consumer's obsession with thinness. With SO many options available to you – why are SO many people still critically obese? DIETS DON'T WORK – neither do "magic" creams and pills. While they may produce short-term results – the long-term picture is not as promising.

You've heard the statistics (maybe you are one of the statistics): The majority of people who lose weight through dieting regain at least the weight they lost and often even more. There was a time for many American's when short-term weight loss was an acceptable consolation prize for a month or two of starvation. You may have eaten everything in sight at your reunion, but you looked great. However, recent research has shown strong links between weight cycling (weight going up and down), slowed metabolism and heart disease. With these as the "prize", why do so many women choose to opt for the same weight loss strategies?

Here's what we KNOW:

- Frequent dieting makes it much more difficult to lose weight.
- Frequent dieting makes it easier to gain weight.
- Metabolic rate slows with frequent dieting.
- Frequent dieting may be a setup for post-diet high fat eating.
- Frequent dieting may lead to greater levels of upper body fat, which has been associated with higher blood pressure and cardiac risk.

Now that you are armed with this information about the complexity of the weight loss picture, should you give up on dieting and exercise? Dieting – YES! Exercise and healthy eating – NO.

Make yourself the promise to NEVER, EVER go on another "diet". Promise yourself that you will become an educated consumer, a regular exercise participant and that you will get help when you need it. Exercise and Nutrition Professionals can offer you the guidance you need to get started with a healthy eating plan as well as a safe and effective exercise program.

If you have had weight loss failure in the past, that doesn't mean that you won't find success this time – give it one more chance.

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The Truth About Abdominal Fat

As summer quickly approaches, many people want to look there best in less. The most popular request I hear this time of year is, "I want to get rid of my stomach and have tighter abs." This seems like a fairly simple request until you tell them that the body doesn't selectively loose fat or inches or weight in just one spot. So how do you get you midsection in shape? Let's first get rid of some of the myths about your abs:

1. Your abs are muscles, just like those in you arms and legs. Muscle and fat are 2 completely separate tissues in the body and cannot be converted one to the other – period. So while you may have abs that are harder than steel, if they are covered with a layer of body fat, you'll never see them – thus diet is important in the quest for the 6 pack.
2. You only have to train abs two or three times a week to get hard, strong muscles. But, you have to train them hard enough for them to require recover time. The key is finding exercises that fatigue your muscles enough for them to require the recovery time. Stability exercises are great for strengthening the abdominal area.
3. Ab exercises DO NOT cause fat reduction in that area. Spot reducing has been disproved over and over, but some people still believe that it works. Here is a great example that I once heard: If you chew gum everyday, you don't get skinny cheeks. Same basic principle, you can't reduce body fat in one area by repeatedly exercising that body part. Burning abdominal fat is the same as burning fat anywhere else on the body – you have to watch your diet and do enough cardiovascular exercise to create a calorie deficit.
4. Getting great abs is much more than doing 1000 sit-ups a day. Let's forget full sit-ups all together. Here's why – doing a full sit-up, while difficult is working the hip flexors – which have nothing to do with the appearance of your abs. Variety is the key to great abs. Do crunches from several angles – these will work not only the rectus abdominis, the most prominent muscle, but also the internal and external obliques and transverse abdominal.

While working your abs, you need to keep several things in mind so that you will keep good form and avoid some common discomforts that come with poor form. You will also want to do exercises that work your back so you will be balanced and have good posture.

Ab Tips:

1. Lay with your back flat on the floor, knees bent, feet flat on the floor about hip width apart.
2. Keep your eyes looking straight at the ceiling. This will help you keep your chin off of your chest.
3. Pretend you have an orange under your chin resting on your chest. At no time do you want to pull on the neck and pull the chin down to the chest.
4. Place only the fingertips behind the ears, not your hands under your head. This will also help you keep your chin up.
5. To begin your crunch, slowly lift your shoulders off of the floor about 2-4 inches. This will engage the abdominal muscles and keep the hip flexors relaxed.
6. Control your body on the negative movement as well – slowly let your abs relax as you move to the floor.

Even with great form and 1001 reps behind you, if you're eating unhealthy foods and not doing cardio and strength training, you may not be reaching your potential.

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If you are trying to change the way your body looks – you need to decrease the amount of body fat you have while maintaining or increasing the amount of lean muscle you have. Follow these simple tips to get your started on the right foot.

1. Never put your body in defensive mode by skipping meals, drastically cutting calories or doing weird diets. This will only make your body want to hold on to the fat more.
2. Don't blame your genes; rather look at your lifestyle and activity level. Small changes in your diet and activity level can make a big difference.
3. SNEAK FAT OFF – slowly – for permanent fat loss.
4. Moderate blood sugar levels by eating small meals more frequently during the day.
5. Eat the right fats. Essential fats are found in beans, grains and nuts. Use olive oil for cooking rather than vegetable oils. Keep total fat around 10-15% of your total calories.
6. Stick to low glycemic carbs – oatmeal and sweet potatoes are examples.
7. Fill up with fiber – fiber allows your body to more efficiently use food for fuel and it's bulk will make you feel full and you will be less likely to overeat.
8. Eat for what you are going to do – not what you have done. For example, if your lunch is at 12 and your workout is at 5, you need a mid-afternoon snack to give you the needed energy for your workout.
9. Add strength training to your workout if you are not currently doing any. Weight bearing exercises help to maintain muscle tissue. Muscle requires more calories than fat – so the more you have the better.
10. DRINK NO LESS THAN 64oz. OF WATER EVERY DAY.

Fat loss and long term good health don't happen over night – you must be patient with the changes you want to see and remind yourself daily that it takes time.

I have been in the Health and Fitness Industry for over 10 years in many capacities: Group Fitness Instructor, Personal Fitness Trainer, Weight Management/Sports Nutrition Consultant (I also do contest preparation for competitive athletes) to Club Owner. I am nationally certified and hold a BA in Psychology from North Carolina State University. I teach Women's Health Workshops twice each year. And I am currently in my Apprentice Judging year with the NPC (National Physique Committee). You can reach me via e-mail me at mailto:profitnessworld@geeksnet.com or at my website http://gymrats.home.att.net

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FITNESS FOR CHILDREN

There are some disconcerting trends prevalent in today's society with regards to children's fitness conditioning. Obesity in children under the age of eighteen is increasing faster than the adult population. Health conditions associated with poor physical conditioning such as hypertension that were usually found in adults are now being diagnosed in children. Children's obesity can also lead to psychological problems such as depression, low self-esteem and distorted self images as well as adversely affect performance in school.

There are many reasons for this. Some of them are sedentary lifestyles, large fast food serving portions and a lack of emphasis on exercise. Parents and adult relatives are responsible for reversing this trend. While constant direct supervision is not always possible here are some tips to help you and your children.

Be aware of portion size when preparing your children's meals.
Try to serve healthy portions of food to your children. Do not force them to eat too much of what you feel is good for them. They will learn to overeat and take this habit with them when they are eating out with their friends.

Teach healthy eating habits.
By encouraging healthy eating habits of smaller portions 5 to 6 times a day, your children will be less likely to binge or overeat when they are eating out .

Encourage exercise and other physical activities.
Emphasize regular exercise, sports and outdoor activities with your children. Try to make these activities "fun" and do not stress "winning" or unrealistic results.

Be supportive and provide positive motivation.
Your children will probably be reluctant to exercise. They may also feel that they are wasting time, inadequate or cannot do it. Stay positive and provide constant support.

Reward good behavior.

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It is very important to reward your children's efforts to eat right and exercise. This will encourage your children to continue with these behaviors.

Participate in physical activities with your children.
This tip has many common sense benefits. It provides you with quality time with your children while participating in activities that are beneficial to everyone.

Practice what you preach.
Be a role model for the next generation. You will enhance your credibility and establish a healthier lifestyle for yourself as well.

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"THE SKINNY ON BODY FAT"

Body fat percentages along with circumference measurements are more indicative methods to determine weight loss and fitness conditioning than total body weight. Most people wish to either tone up, lose weight, gain muscle or reshape their physiques. This often involves not only body fat loss, but increase in lean muscle mass. Stepping on a scale will not tell you if your weight loss is mostly body fat. Also, lean muscle gains often cause an increase in total body weight. Therefore, it is better to measure body fat percentages to assess whether fitness or health goals are being attained.

Body fat percentage is simply the percentage of body fat your body contains. Women have a higher body fat percentage than men because men proportionally have more muscle tissue and therefore lower body fat percentages.

The following scale describes body fat percent ranges and categories.
Keep in mind that as we age our body fat percentage increases at an average rate of 1% per year after the age of 21. The average age in the table below is 35 years. If you are younger you should be on the lower end of the category range. If you are older you will be at the upper end of the category range.

Classification	***Women – Body Fat %**	***Men – Body Fat %**
ESSENTIAL FAT	10 – 12%	2 – 4%

This is the essential fat necessary for basic health and survival. Individuals in this category or lower are undernourished, may have an eating disorder or a medical condition.

ATHLETES	**14 – 20%**	**6 – 13%**

Individuals in this category include many professional athletes, people who exercise intensely and individuals with genetically low body fat percentages.

FITNESS	**21 – 24%**	**14 – 17%**

This is the range that most people should strive for as a goal. Individuals can achieve these measurements with proper and regular exercise and dietary habits.

ACCEPTABLE	**25 – 31%**	**18 – 25%**

This category include most adults that do not exercise regularly. It also includes individuals that have genetically high body fat percentages but exercise and diet properly.

OBESE	**32% plus**	**25% plus**

These individuals are either genetically predisposed to higher body fat percentages or are sedentary and do not exercise or eat properly at all. This category has the highest risk of medical

complications associated with high body fat percentages. Fortunately these individuals can make the largest reductions in body fat percentages and gain the greatest health improvements.
American Council on Exercise

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GUIDELINES FOR TAKING SUPPLEMENTS

There is much debate today concerning the pros and cons of taking nutritional supplements. While I believe that most supplements can be beneficial, the wrong supplement or improper dosage can cause serious and even fatal results.

The main reason you should take supplements is to "supplement" your diet with essential nutrients that may not be available in sufficient quantities from your daily food intake. This is especially true for people on caloric restrictive diets necessary for weight loss. Other common reasons are performance enhancement, muscle gain and anti-aging prevention.

If you are currently taking nutritional supplements or are considering taking supplements, here are some helpful guidelines to follow.

GET A MEDICAL EXAM
Before taking any supplements, get a check up from your physician. You may have a physical condition that may be contraindicated for a particular type of supplement. Discuss with your physician your supplement plan and follow any recommendations.

ASK FITNESS PROFESSIONALS
Physicians usually are well versed in medical knowledge but don't always know the latest research on supplements. Ask your pharmacist, personal trainer, nutritionist or health foods store salesperson for additional information.

LEARN ABOUT THE SUPPLEMENTS ON YOUR OWN
Do not rely on the advice or word of others even professionals as your only source for information on supplements. Do some research on your own to find additional information on a supplement. The internet is a good place to start.

AVOID STRANGE BREWS, CONCOCTIONS OR POTIONS
Use supplements from a name brand company that provides pharmaceutical grade products and list all the ingredients. Stay away from unusual or unknown items.

FOLLOW THE DOSAGE
Make sure to follow the recommended dosage for a particular supplement. This is true for the dosage amount, ingestion timing, water intake and food consumption.

MORE IS NOT BETTER
Do not assume that ingesting a greater amount of a particular supplement will increase the effects of that supplement. It won't. Over dosage is the main reason why people become sick, injured or suffer even worse consequences.

DISCONTINUE USING SUPPLEMENTS IF YOU HAVE SIDE EFFECTS
Even though you may be medically and physically fit to take a particular supplement, if you feel any unusual side effects stop at once. Your body is trying to tell you that this supplement may not be right for you.

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Top AEROBIC EXERCISE AND HYPERTENSION

Regular aerobic endurance exercise is considered by many physicians to be an essential adjunct for both short term and long term control of hypertension. Regular aerobic exercise appears to reduce both systolic and diastolic blood pressures, cardiac output, resting peripheral arterial resistance and sympathetic activity. Here are some helpful tips to keep in mind when workout.

CONSULT WITH YOUR PHYSICIAN
If you are diagnosed with hypertension, before beginning any form of exercise consult with your physician. Ask for specific exercise guidelines and how your hypertensive medication could affect your workouts.

EXTEND WARM UP AND COOL DOWN TIMES TIMES
Extend you warm up and cool down times to approximately 10 minutes. Gradually build up to your maximum exercise intensity and then slowly reduce your intensity. This will avoid excessive blood pressure increases as a result of your exercise.

EXERCISE 5 TO 6 TIMES A WEEK
For optimal control of your hypertension from exercise, it is recommended that you exercise 5 to 6 times a week anywhere from 30 to 60 minutes.

INCORPORATE INTERVAL TRAINING
Try to incorporate some form of light interval training into your activities. This will make your aerobic activities more efficient and less monotonous

AVOID EXCESSIVE IMPACT
Since it is recommended that an individual with clinically diagnosed hypertension exercise 5 to 6 times a week, it is good idea to incorporate aerobic activities that have little or no impact. This will help avoid joint and/or muscular discomfort.

KEEP INTENSITY LOW TO MODERATE
Keep your exercise intensity low to moderate. This will also avoid higher heart rates and blood pressure. Initial exercise intensities should be 40% to 65% of your maximum heart rate. Over time the intensity may be increased to 55% to 70%.

If you have a specific health and fitness question, email Dr. Vince Lambri directly at info@ebfit.com

Top GENES THAT FIT

How Genetic Heritage Can Affect Your Fitness

In the last few years, the human genome has been largely mapped out. This remarkable achievement will lead to a better understanding and treatment of many diseases that have up to now eluded a cure. It also appears that research has begun to establish a correlation between an individual's genes and fitness level.

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Many research studies using families have found significant similarities in body composition, HDL and LDL blood levels, and blood pressure. A 30 year study on exercise response, involving 200 families, conducted by Dr. Claude Bouchard of the Pennington Biomedical Research Center at Louisiana State University, concluded that there was a three time greater variance in maximal oxygen uptake levels between families than within families. Clearly, genetics is a factor in these results.

It should be no surprise to many of us that fitness levels and appearance vary greatly in individuals who engage in similar workouts. Also it seems that some people develop significant increases in muscle mass and/or body fat reduction no matter what type of resistance training they perform, while others hardly change in appearance despite intense frequent workouts.

This information may be discouraging to some. However, a more positive outlook is that we use these findings as a rationale for setting realistic fitness goals. We should not obsess with obtaining levels of muscle bulk or weight loss that are physically and genetically impossible to achieve. We should concentrate on improving our health, maximizing our own unique physical potential and playing the game of life as best as we can with the hand that was dealt to each of us.

If you would like to see Dr. Vince Lambri, address a particular health and fitness topic or if you have a question, email him directly at info@ebfit.com

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TIPS FOR SETTING UP A HOME EXERCISE ROOM

Home exercise studios are becoming very popular. They allow for the ease of exercising in your own home, whenever it is convenient to workout. Traveling to a health club, toting your exercise attire, parking and unwanted comments by others are no longer problems.
There are several factors to keep in mind when setting up your home exercise room. Too often people buy the wrong equipment, spend too much money and end up using the exercise room to hang the laundry. Here are some tips to help you avoid these situations and get the most out of your investment.

MEASURE YOUR ROOM OR SPACE

Take the time to measure the dimensions of your intended exercise room or space. This will allow for proper planning and placement of your exercise equipment

RESEARCH THE EXERCISE EQUIPMENT

There are many types of exercise equipment available. Research the equipment to determine if it is what you would like to use and whether or not it will be effective in achieving your fitness goals.

MEASURE THE EQUIPMENT DIMENSIONS

This information is usually included in equipment catalogues and brochures. This information will allow you to properly position your equipment. Don't forget to allow at least three feet around a piece of equipment so that you can use it correctly. Also allow for an area of free space for floor exercises and stretching.

PURCHSES THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT FOR YOU

Make sure the equipment you purchase is right for you. For instance, you may not need an exercise machine with a 1000 pound capacity if you don't lift anything heavier than 150 pounds. Also consider if more than one person will use the equipment at the same time. Equipment for single person use is usually less expensive than commercial grade equipment found in health clubs.

SET UP YOUR EXERCIES ROOM IN STAGES

Start with basic equipment such as free weights, tubes, stability balls and then gradually add more equipment over time. You can avoid spending too much on equipment that you will not use.

ADD A TV AND OR MUSIC

Add a TV and music to your exercise room. A great workout can be done while watching a game or your favorite TV show. Listening to music can keep you relaxed and focused while you exercise.

USE PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

Ask a certified personal trainer or equipment dealer for advice on what to incorporate into your home exercise room. EveryBody Fitness offers exercise room design and equipment services. Contact us at (800) 575-8611 or info@ebfit.com for assistance

INCORPORATE THE SPACE WITH YOUR CHILDREN'S PLAYROOM

If your children tend to hang out in your basement, if possible set up your exercise area there. You can spend more time with your kids and workout at the same time. They may also develop an interest in exercise as well. However, be careful with small or young children

If you would like to see Dr. Vince Lambri, address a particular topic of have a specific question, email him at info@ebfit.com

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Dr. Vince Lambri's involvement with health and fitness began twenty-one years ago when he graduated from Northwestern University Medical and Dental School. At that time he embarked on a career as a health care professional. In order to keep himself in shape and relieve the stress of career Top responsibilities, he attempted to workout at various fitness centers and health clubs. However, he often found himself stagnated in his workout routines. Like many people, he did not get any meaningful results or benefits, and ultimately ended up not exercising at all.

Fifteen years ago, he began to exercise regularly with a certified personal trainer. His trainer's expertise and motivation changed his exercise experience entirely. He soon looked forward to working out and enjoyed exercising. Most importantly, He saw real changes in his physique and felt healthier than ever. In short he saw RESULTS. Finally, he broke through his exercise and fitness plateaus, something Vince had not been able to achieve on his own.

Dr. Vince Lambri found himself increasingly interested in the science of resistance training, nutrition, weight training and exercising. He was surprised to learn that there is a tremendous amount of information concerning exercising and physical fitness. Often there seemed to be conflicting viewpoints about the merits and methods of different exercises. He began to earnestly study the science of exercise and fitness and became a certified personal trainer with the American Council on Exercise.

The many experiences Vince had as a personal trainer became increasingly rewarding. He felt he was making a real and positive difference in people's lives. Subsequently, Vince realized that he wanted a career as a fitness professional. He sold my private practice and devoted himself to a full-time career as a certified personal trainer. Expanding on my fitness, nutritional and medical knowledge, Vince has furthered his studies and education by achieving an Advanced Level National Academy of Sports Medicine Personal Training Certification and an APEX Fitness Professional, Body Composition and Nutritional Counseling Certification.

For the past thirteen years, Dr. Vince Lambri has been personal training many different types of people in his private exercise studio, at individuals' homes and at health clubs.

Vince's personal fitness philosophy is quite simple. "Everybody can improve their health, appearance and lifestyle regardless of their age, athletic ability or medical history. Making it happen is the real challenge and reward of being a fitness professional."

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STRESS LESS AND LIVE MORE

Having a life that is stress free may seem impossible yet we can take clear steps to reduce our stress. Sometimes it is good to take inventory of your life: business, family, personal, interpersonal, extracurricular, spiritual and see where we feel strong and where we need improvement. Below is a survey for you to gauge your reactions to certain situation and feelings in your life. Use the survey as a starting point to access your true potential.

On a scale of 1 –5 please rate the following – 1 never, 2 rarely, 3 sometimes, 4 most of the time, 5 all of the time

1. I wake up tired in the morning
2. I do not sleep through the night
3. I do not have enough time to complete my tasks each day
4. I suffer from tight muscles, headaches, back or neck pain
5. I have a hard time concentrating
6. I feel lousy when I do not work out hard enough
7. I feel lousy when I do not exercise
8. I drink caffeine to keep me awake or give me energy
9. I wish I had a better sex life
10. I often feel like I have to take on more responsibility then I should
11. I have a hard time saying NO
12. I get impatient in traffic or waiting in lines

Did any of the answers surprise you? Think about why or why not…

How can you make some of your answers a 1 or 2? Is it possible?

What's the best thing you did for yourself this week? How did it make you feel – both mentally and physically?

Five Easy Tips To Lower Your Rating to a 1 or 2

- Get plenty of rest (four hours does not cut it for most of us)
- Create a "rule of seven" solution sheet – write down your problem and come up with at least seven ways to solve it (this will stretch your mind and offer creative solutions)
- Practice deep breathing by taking slow, controlled belly breaths before stressful situations
- Retell your stressful story like it was from a certain movie genre (i.e. you got into a fight with your boss – share it with a friend like a soap opera or science fiction movie)
- Laugh more often (Have you ever wondered why children laugh more than adults?)

Stress doesn't have to make your life a mess. By creating a solid foundation for physical and mental well being you can stress less and live more.

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Every Breath You Take

Breath is fundamental to life –without the ability to breathe we die. Effective breathing is critical for maintaining optimal health. As a society we spend millions of dollars training our bodies to become stronger, leaner, suppler and aesthetically pleasing. We go to the gym, hire trainers, run marathons, follow the latest fad diet and take vitamins in hopes of creating a healthier body. All of these choices can help but oftentimes we forget to pay attention to a key component of optimal health – BREATH.

Breathing is something we do all the time without thinking about it. We inhale and exhale approximately 25,000 times per day. The way we breathe affects our fitness training, stress levels, metabolism, heart rate and energy (just to mention a few). By focusing on how we breathe, we pay attention to how we are feeling both physically and mentally. This can improve our fitness regimen and daily life.

Try this test to see how you breathe.

Place one hand on your chest and one hand on your diaphragm or belly. Take a deep breathe in and a deep breathe out. Which hand moved when you took your breath? Did you feel your chest move in and out or did you feel your stomach move in and out? If you answered stomach – congratulations you are on the right path to wellness. If you answered chest don't despair.

You know how to breathe correctly. I can assure you of that. The moment you took your first breath as a baby you were doing it right. Somewhere along the line in our "hurried" world you changed your breathing to accommodate your lifestyle. Breathing from the chest is what we do when we are under stress –both good stress and distress. Unfortunately it increases our heart rate, gives us less energy, causes tension headaches and stiff muscles, raises our blood pressure, causes us to get more agitated, puts strain on our heart and tightens our muscles

Here is how to breathe to achieve optimal health.

1. Place one hand on your chest and one hand on your stomach
2. Exhale through your mouth and contract your stomach
3. Inhale through your nose and expand your stomach
4. Repeat this several times and exaggerate your breathing (if you experience too much dizziness exaggerate your breathing less)

Tips for breathing properly- Imagine your stomach is a balloon. When you inhale you are inflating the balloon. Imagine the air is going down your back, past your ribs and into your stomach. When you exhale you are deflating the balloon.

If you are not used to breathing this way don't worry; it takes practice. I invite you to try this method three times a day (taking ten breathes) for one week to see for yourself. Just as with anything new, the more you practice the more natural it becomes. Imagine your body is a car that runs best on good fuel. A simple way to ensure quality performance is to fuel your body with effective breathing.

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When Your Workout Partner Isn't Working Out.

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Many of you like having a partner to help encourage you when you exercise. Perhaps this person is willing to go jogging at 5:30 am with you or faithfully meet you at the gym three times a week. A workout partner can hold you accountable, be a sounding board for your stressors and give you a bit more motivation to exercise. Most of the time, this arrangement works well and helps to keep you committed to exercise. However what happens when you have been working out with the same partner and it is no longer working out?

As in any relationship communication is a key to success. Maybe your partner has been late more often than not, or you feel they drain you rather than energize you, or they goof around too much and you prefer to be serious. There can be a variety of reasons why you are unhappy with the arrangement and by exploring these reasons you can create a situation that works for you, as well as the other person. Even if you haven't spoken your truth, your workout partner can probably sense that something is not quite right so it is best to talk about it.

What were my expectations when I decided to have a workout partner?

Before you began the partnership you may not have stated your expectations. However, there are some fundamental beliefs you have about relationships and when you do not state them clearly to yourself and the other person friction can generate. You may expect that they not be late, call when the have to cancel, push you harder than you would push yourself or open up and share stories about their lives. You may want them to be at the same level of fitness as you, or have knowledge in areas that you do not know so you can swap ideas. If you did not clearly state your objectives in the beginning, do it now and ask your partner to do the same thing. Problems often arise because we have a belief that the other person is letting us down and they may not even know what they are doing. Learn to appreciate differences by being open to discussing them.

How do I typically behave when I am frustrated with someone else?

Perhaps you cancel scheduled appointments because you would rather not deal with the situation or maybe you take out your frustration by being short tempered with the other person. People create patterns of behavior and by looking at the ways you handle uncomfortable situations you can learn to speak up and do what you really want. Remember, the only person that can take our power away from us, is ourselves.

How can I address my partner without them becoming defensive?

Speak from a place of I. What I mean by that is always say: "I feel, I believe, I think that this doesn't work for me" rather than "You don't care, you aren't supportive, you are unreliable". The latter statements can sound accusatory and are your opinions and not necessarily the facts. Here is an example: My workout partner and I agreed to meet three times a week at 1 pm. The goal was to lift weights. The two of us liked to warm up and stretch before the workout. Growing up I was taught: "Early is on time and on time is late" therefore I followed this motto. I would show up at 12:45 pm and do the warm up routine. My partner would show up at 1 pm and want to spend fifteen minutes warming up. I got frustrated with her because I felt like she was cutting into our weight training time. By stepping back and looking at the deeper reason for being mad, I was able to realize that we had not communicated our needs clearly. I told her about my

fundamental belief and what I wanted from our relationship. She did the same and the problem was no longer a problem.

Hopefully you and your partner are able to talk about the things that frustrate you and come up with a situation that works better for both of you. It's not always easy to find someone to be your faithful workout partner, so don't throw away a good thing just because of a few differences. No two people are exactly the same, so any relationship we enter will have its ups and downs. The key to a successful relationship is to be able to communicate openly.

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Straighten Up

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Do you remember your mom saying, "Stand up straight your slouching?" Mom knew what she was talking about so why is it that we have ignored her advice? Look around you at the gym and you will see: rounded shoulders, locked knees, protruded necks, convex backs and stomachs that hang out. It is crucial to carry yourself with correct posture to: prevent injuries, increase your energy and look better and feel more confident. .
All too often in the gym, we focus on the specific body part we are lifting and forget that the body is a connected system. Follow these steps below to ensure a healthy posture throughout the day and while performing any exercise.

Proper Posture

- Stand or sit with your feet evenly planted on the ground (balanced between the front/back and side to side)
- Do not lock your knees – keep them loose so the bulk of your weight is on your quads not lower back
- Scoop your abs – down, back and in to protect your back
- Imagine your spine is a rod (it is straight)
- Round your shoulders back and stick your chest out
- Keep your chin parallel to the ground
- Imagine a balloon is attached to your head and is pulling you upward

Put these all together and you will stand straight, elevate pressure on your back and ultimately feel better.

At first you may feel strange carrying yourself this way but with practice it will become more normal. You will also be activating muscles that you haven't used in a while so you may feel a slight tiredness like you've just completed a workout. As a Taoist saying goes: be supple like an infant, flexible like a snake and flow like a river.

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Me- Meditate?

Imagine yourself pleasantly tired from a day of skiing. You are ready to rest. You go to the lodge and gather around the fireplace with friends. Everyone is talking, laughing and relaxing. Without realizing it you your mind wanders away from the conversation and you begin to stare into the flames. You become fully present to the fire. You notice the flames look like they are dancing and that the warmth of the fire feels like a blanket over your body. You only return back to the conversation, when your friend taps you on the shoulder and asks your opinion to a question you never heard. It's been ten minutes and you do not even realize it.

Without being aware of it, you were practicing meditation. Meditation is the art of letting go and being fully present in your body. Meditation does not have to be practiced sitting in an ashram with a yogi. It can be

done anywhere and at anytime and you do not need to be a “new age practitioner” to meditate. In fact, meditation benefits everyone.

What are the benefits of meditation?

- Reduces blood pressure
- Lowers heart rate
- Increases energy
- Lessens stress
- Improves concentration/awareness

How do I meditate?

The idea behind meditation is to let go of thoughts, worries and stories from the day. You begin by relaxing your body. You can be sitting, standing or even moving but make sure you are comfortable. Your muscles should be loose, your breathing conscious and your mind open. You focus your attention on your breathing and each time a thought enters your mind let it go. Do not get worried if you sit down to meditate and your mind races; simply return to your breath when that happens.

One good beginning technique is from Vipassana Meditation-

1. Close your eyes and breath slowly.
2. Focus your attention on the area between your nostrils and your upper lip.
3. Feel the sensations in that small area while you exhale and inhale.
4. Every time your mind races; bring your attention back to the area above your lip.
5. Some observations may include: feeling warm air from your nostrils, tingling above the lip, noticing which nostril the air escapes through, and listening to the sounds of your breath.

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Is meditating difficult?

Meditation can seem challenging when we first start. Our minds are filled with so many ideas and assessments. Don’t worry if you start to think about things such as: what you are having for dinner, what chores need to be done around the house, how you can’t relax, or how you should be finishing the report instead of sitting here. When that happens remember to simply go back to the breath. The key is not to judge those thoughts or your progress. There is no correct formula or rating system to determine that you are a “top performer of meditation”.

How long do I meditate?

Each of us has a comfort zone. You many notice that you can stay relatively focused for two minutes and then you get antsy or you may be able to hang in there for twenty minutes. Everyone may be different and every day may be different. I have found that if I push myself beyond my comfort zone it actually gets easier and more beneficial in time. There is no set amount of time for meditating but I would suggest starting with ten minutes per day. That is usually longer than one can remain comfortable and not so long that we get antsy.

Which kind of meditation is best?

There are many ways to meditate. Some examples are: listen to soft music, focus on a mantra (a sentence repeated over and over), feel the sensations in your body, visualize your favorite place or concentrate on a color. There is no “best” way to meditate. Try different methods and see which ones you enjoy most. You can find out about the types by searching the web, going to your local bookstore, signing up for a workshop or asking around.

One of my favorite proverbs says, “If you do external exercises you must do internal exercises”. Meditation helps us calm our mind and body. Set aside time each day to give yourself this gift.

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Name The Dream To Claim The Dream

Imagine having a confidant, someone who focuses only on you and your dreams. She listens to the changes you want to make in your life and works with you to create a plan of action. She nudges you to dream big and follow those dreams. She works with you on overcoming those self- defeating habits and encourages you to have a life of balance and fulfillment. She makes sure you are held accountable for your actions. And she honors you for your successes and supports you through disappointments. She is a life coach and she is devoted 100% to you.

As a coach, she has the ability to see you from a unique perspective. She concentrates her energy on observing your words, actions, emotions, and body and brings them forth to your awareness. She invites you to stop telling yourself the same stories and encourages you to find a new way of looking at you life. Through conversations and exercises the two of you co-create a strategy for your fulfillment.
Let’s imagine you are with her and she is offering you a chance for exploration. She invites you find quiet place where you are comfortable so you can relax and focus on you. She knows you spend much of your day focusing on requests from others and she knows you are deserving of personal time. She talks with you about your dreams and how you can successfully accomplish them. She is here to guide you through the process and offers you a worksheet for self-reflection. It’s called Name the Dream to Claim
The Dream and now is your chance to complete it.

Name the Dream to Claim the Dream Exercise

This is an exercise that you can do, that will help you begin to realize your dreams. Sit comfortably, close your eyes and start taking in deep breaths. Stay in that place until you feel calm and ready to begin looking at your goals.

Ask yourself these questions and write down your answers.

1. What is it that I want in my life right now?
2. What is that I am putting up with and no longer want?

The key here is not to judge your answers, simply write them down and observe your answers. What thoughts and emotions came up for you? Perhaps one question was easier to answer than the other. Ask yourself why this may be. What resistance showed up for you?

Keep these thoughts in mind and be aware of them for the next couple of days. How do they show up in your daily life? Next write down the two most important goals for your immediate future.
Then ask yourself these questions and write down your answers.

1. What will it take for me to achieve these goals?
2. What are the potential roadblocks? How will I handle them?
3. How will I hold myself accountable?
4.

Now imagine yourself out of your coach’s office, and back in your daily life. You now have a plan and you are eager to achieve the results. Now you understand that this is a process and you enjoy the process. Now you feel empowered to take control of whatever is thrown your way. You are your number one fan and you will always encourage yourself to dream big.

WENDY LUBELL,is a certified life coach and certified personal trainer. She works with individuals and corporations in creating lasting change. Some of her modalities are: life coaching, yoga, meditation, strength training, improvisational theater, body movement and creative expression. Her past experiences encompass: designing school based wellness seminars, leading wilderness survival expeditions, playing professional soccer, performing improvisational comedy and teaching. Her experiences have taken her all over the world. She has conducted programs for: The International Coaching Federation, The U.S. Small Business Administration, Opnet, The Women's Business Center of Washington, DC, The DC Jewish Community Center, Women of Washington, Fitness Corps, Maya Angelou Charter School in addition to working with individuals in the US, Europe and South America. Her website is www.equafit.com

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Wishing you continued peace and health
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Founder and President of AtoZfitness.com

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